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ABSTRACT

Numbers 1 through 5 of the 1985 TECFORS newsletter include these articles: "Working with the E.S.L. and the Developmental Student in the Same Classroom" (Dorothy Farris Findlen); "Academic Writing Standards: A Questionnaire" (Ann M. Johns); "ESL for the Deaf: Part I, the Importance of the First Language" (D. Steinbach); "A Plan to Make Correcting Writing Errors Enjoyable: Implementing Peer Revision" (Gwendolyn V. Charvis); "An Indirect Measure of Writing Skills for Student Placement in Freshman and Pre-Freshman ESL Courses" (Joseph O. Davidson); "Time for the 'Basic' Basics: One-to-One Conferencing with E.S.L. Students" (Patricia Johnson); "Linking Writing Journals to Writing in the ESL Classroom" (Parts 1 and 2) (Ilona Leki); "Workplace Simulations: A Strategy for Audience-Centered Writing" (Michael Paul); "A Guide to Teaching Writing Skills to Intermediate E.S.L. Students" (Julia Williamson); "ESL for the Deaf: Part II, Teaching Reading through Language-Experience" (D. Steinbach); and book reviews and notes on professional activities. (MSE)

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A newsletter for instructors of writing
and reading to ESL and bi-lingual (adult) students

Volume VIII January 1985 Number 1

TO BEGIN. . .

In this issue we bring together both the reviewer and the authors of a recently published reading/writing textbook. We invite your response to the issues thus highlighted and would like to know how your curricula balance the components involved in teaching reading and writing to college students, especially those in basic writing courses.

Also, we invite your participation in the study in progress by Ann Johns.

This month we begin, too, a second article by Dorothy Farris Findlen, who finds it possible to teach students with different language backgrounds and needs in the same classroom.

Finally, we are delighted to announce the arrival of the newest member of our editorial family, tiny Pamela Mae Davis, born January 20 to Ann Daubney-Davis and her husband Scott.

Robert L. Saitz, Maureen Dezell and Francine B. Stieglitz
Contemporary Perspectives: An Advanced Reader/Rhetoric in English.
Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1984. 253 pp.

Linda J. Robinson
University of Houston
University Park

Robert Saitz, et al's Contemporary Perspectives is a collection of contemporary readings accompanied by pre- and post-reading exercises. The book contains six chapter units of four readings each, which provide different views on or aspects of the subjects at hand ("The Family.. World Problems..The Body..Communicating Across Cultures..Personality..Work in

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the Modern World and Science and Technology"). The book's minor fault, if one considers it so, is its focus on vocabulary exercises which tend to be repetitive in form. However, the authors have included many subject reading comprehension exercises and have chosen a stimulating group of articles.

In the chapter entitled "The Body," for instance, four articles -- "The Body," "Sources of Stress," "Exercise: How Much Do You Need?" and the notable "Effects of Beauty Found to Run Surprisingly Deep" -- discuss various sides of the same general topic. Before each reading, the authors provide questions which allow the students to anticipate content, skim for general information and scan for specific information. Then, an exercise entitled "Vocabulary from Context" allows students to guess at difficult vocabulary, all before reading. Additional activities (like note-taking), not directly tied to particular readings, occur at the beginning of each chapter. Here, also, the discussion of understanding main ideas, which contains the notions of topic and main idea (focus) can be a good bridge into the discovery of paragraph organization in any class, even in a grammar review course, in which little time may be allotted for rhetorical skills.

After each reading, the authors have included a set of discussion and comprehension questions followed by the main body of exercises, most of which are vocabulary related. Among other recurring exercises are those which deal with rhetorical skills, such as scrambled paragraphs, paragraphs with missing topic sentences and exercises which require students to supply sentences to support a given topic sentence. In particular, the scrambled exercises often result in debates among students as to which order of sentences is correct, and arguments about the "clues" to this order.

This is definitely a hands-on reader which involves the students in worthwhile activities. Still, the one difficulty I have had in using it is its emphasis on vocabulary. At the University of Houston, in our two-track pre-freshman basic writing course for non-native speakers of English, the pressures of teaching all the complex rules of English syntax in the first track (one semester), or organization, transition and cohesive skills, as well as grammar, in the second track (one semester) do not allow a great deal of time for vocabulary building, as badly as this is also needed. Therefore, fitting the Saitz, Dezell and Stieglitz reader into our classes is difficult. For teachers, however, who need a vocabulary-oriented ESL reader, this is certainly an excellent choice. But those who have similar class time limitations as we do at UH may need to incorporate grammatical exercises and more rhetorical work into their syllabus.

Here, I will include two typical vocabulary exercises from the text. The first is a fill-in-the-blank exercise in which students are allowed to alter verb tense, but not word forms in choosing the correct words to complete a paragraph. The next is a table of word forms which gives one form of the word and asks students to supply others. Both of the exercises below come from the chapter on "The Body." We generally do both of these exercises as a group, taking care to write the word forms of the second exercise on the board.

VOCABULARY

Fill in the blanks in the paragraph below with words from the lists. You do not have to use all of the words, and you may use a word more than once.

Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs
machine	simple	function
fuel	complex	operate
energy	useful	work
temperature		utilize
result		require
surface		deteriorate
nourishment		

The human body _____ like a machine but not like a _____ machine. The _____ for this _____ comes from food which is burned at a _____ _____ of 98.6°F. To burn food, the body _____ oxygen. The _____ of the combustion of food is heat, and some of this heat is lost from the _____ of the body. The rest of the heat does _____ work such as the _____ of the muscles. When deprived of this nourishment, the body will no longer _____; it begins to _____.

Complete the following table.

	Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives & Participles	Adverbs
1.	_____	deteriorate	_____	XXX
2.	nourishment	_____	_____	XXX
3.	function	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	require	XXX	XXX
5.	contraction	_____	_____	XXX
6.	_____	_____	composed	XXX
7.	_____	produce	_____	XXX
8.	result	_____	_____	XXX
9.	_____	specialize	_____	XXX
10.	_____	XXX	intricate	_____

The emphasis on vocabulary is really a matter of choice for the teacher. Certainly all readers must contain a good portion of vocabulary work, and I wish our classes allowed us all the time we needed to pursue vocabulary building. But, realistically, we must deal with a variety of subjects in one class. Thus, I find it helpful to add different kinds of exercises, especially ones that deal with the grammatical or rhetorical point our class is working on at the time. This has also been helpful in awakening my students' interest when I see them grow weary of facing the same kinds of exercises. For example, in a grammar class, I coordinated discussion of the interesting reading, "The Number One Problem," a survey of what intellectuals in numerous fields consider the world's major problem, with the conditional tense. The "what if" situations inherent in this subject, i.e. if you were a world leader who could decide policies, or if it were the year 2000, lent themselves to several useful exercises to emphasize the conditional forms. The chapter on the body mentioned previously also offers many possibilities in discussing the modals.

The care with which the reading selections were chosen is evident: "Here Am I, a Worker" by Studs Terkel and "Work, Labor and Play" by W.H. Auden both complement a discussion on what people really expect from their jobs. The science/technology chapter, with articles like "Computers Today" and "Genetic Engineering" naturally appeals to students who study like fields. "Learning to Communicate Across Cultures" is a general introduction into the subject followed by the article-in-a-chart, "The Ways of Americans, Through Vietnamese Eyes" and "The World Is Mixed Up," a global look at cultures. All in all, the readings are a refreshing change from the typical ESL readers students have come to expect.

In summary, I would recommend the Saitz, Dezell and Stieglitz book for its quality of readings, but warn teachers that unless they particularly want to concentrate on vocabulary, then they may have to supplement the exercises with their own. Many of us lack time during a hectic term to create exercises, but since the perfect text in any field does not seem to exist, this kind of teaching preparation is often necessary. Thus, with this reservation, I find this reader a source for enlightening class discussion. Perhaps if the authors could be enticed to vary the exercise types in future editions, they might be close to producing a perfect reader.

COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW

FROM ONE OF THE AUTHORS

Dr. Robert Saitz
Boston University

1. Of the approximately thirty kinds of language activities in each chapter, only six are related specifically to a vocabulary label; the other twenty-four include reading skills (skimming, scanning, etc.), structured and free writing, discussion, rhetoric and

projects. See sample below. Since pure vocabulary exercises tend to take up a good deal of space on a page, it probably looks as if their role is more prominent than it is.

DISCUSSION

1. How do Arabs and North Americans treat public spaces differently?
2. Why do North Americans and Arabs consider each other "pushy"?
3. How do people in your country treat public and moving spaces?

. . .

STRUCTURED WRITING

Combine each group of sentences below into a single sentence. (There may be several possibilities for each group.) Then find the sentence in the reading that carries the same information and compare it with your sentence.

1. I felt annoyed by this intrusion.
   I moved my body in such a way as to communicate annoyance.

   _____

   _____

2. Fortunately, a group of people soon arrived.
   My tormentor immediately joined this group of people.

   _____

   _____

3. In Beirut only the hardy sit in the last row in a movie theater.
   There are usually standees who want seats.
   The standees push and shove and make a nuisance.

   _____

   _____

. . .

The following paragraphs are written in simple sentences. Combine them into more mature sentences and be prepared to justify your result.

The Germans, the English, the Americans, and the French share significant portions of each other's cultures. At many points their cultures clash. The misunderstandings that arise are all the more serious. Sophisticated Americans and Europeans take pride in correctly interpreting each other's behavior.[23]

In contrast to the Arab, the ego of the German is extraor-

dinarily exposed. The Germans will go to almost any length to preserve their private sphere. This was observed in World War II. American soldiers had opportunities to observe German prisoners under a variety of circumstances. There was one instance in the Midwest. German prisoners of war were housed four to a small hut. Materials for building became available. Each prisoner built a partition. Each prisoner wanted to have his own space.[24]

. . .

RHETORICAL FOCUS: COMPARISON/CONTRAST

1. The people in most countries are not homogeneous. In a paragraph, describe two of the most similar groups in your country. Then describe the two most different groups. Your classifications may be based on education, wealth, cultural background, occupation, and so forth.
2. In some countries, there have been attempts to "homogenize" the population by imposing one set of cultural habits and one language on a diverse population. Choose a country where this has happened and find out about it. Then write an essay comparing and contrasting the advantages and disadvantages of such a policy.
3. Write an essay comparing and contrasting certain aspects of your culture with those in the United States.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Conduct an interview with a member of your class who is from a culture dissimilar to your own. Ask that person about aspects of his or her culture discussed in the chapter. Then write an outline, report to the class on what you have found out.
2. We often have stereotypes about people and places before we see them. After we experience the reality, our opinions frequently change. Choose a group of people or a place that you know and describe how your ideas about them changed as a result of your experience with the reality.

2. The text is designed for and used with advanced level students, either in university composition courses for international students or top levels of intensive and semi-intensive programs. The reviewer seems to have to used it with a "mid-level" class and that may account for the feeling that a grammar component is central for her class. We use a grammar as a reference supplement in our composition courses and instructors assign sections from a text like Frank's on an individual or small group basis.

3. The reviewer has done a service by calling attention to the role of vocabulary. In her "real world" and in the world of many university EFL composition texts, rhetoric and grammar form the heart of the curriculum, and vocabulary is treated in passing. One result seems to be students who can write many brief sentences in neat paragraph formwith a plethora of transition words. The problem is that they cannot say anything significant or interesting about their topic because they don't have the vocabulary. It's as if they're being taught the form without much consideration of the function. We feel, as we note in the preface, that the ability to read, write and talk at the university level depends significantly upon a vocabulary foundation, and we have tried to provide a broad range of activities that will engage students in vocabulary use; vocabulary work, which includes reading, writing and speaking, may be a ghost of Christmas past but it leads to the rather human abilities of discrimination, evaluation and worthwhile communication.

WORKING WITH THE E.S.L.

AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENT IN THE SAME CLASSROOM.

Dorothy Farris Findlen
Louisiana State University

At many institutions, the E.S.L., the Developmental, and any students who have out-of-the-ordinary "different" learning problems often find themselves in classes together. Administrators have very probably devised this grouping because, well, what <u>does</u> one do with the uncommon, those who are out of step, who can't, who won't, who don't? Put them together--it <u>is</u>, of course, the most logical thinking to do, isn't it? Surely those who group these students do not realize, and probably never will, that, in their diversities, these strange, out-of-step, non-traditional students of language share common needs, desires, frustrations, and, yes, triumphs. They have been placed in the right place for the wrong reason! It is unknowing wisdom that has "lumped" them together, so to speak, because it is there that they will meet the teachers who, if they have taught <u>only one</u> of these groups--the E.S.L. or the Developmental--have the required skills to teach the other one.

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For the fourteen years that I have taught, I have been helping students to say, mean, and/or think in one language or another. I have taught not only French to Americans but also English to Internationals and English to Developmental students, a veritable "menage a trois" who form, not a domestic but an educational triangle where components are related in spite of themselves. One very probably would not think of these three very different groups as having common ground; however, the opposite is true. Many of us who have taught at least two of these groups will very readily agree.

It must be established that students who are placed in remedial (developmental) English classes are, indeed, required to learn another language. Teachers of those students have enjoyed many anecdotes which are based on this fact--one must find humor in one's circumstances in order to remain sane! In Developmental English courses, one must teach vocabulary, verb forms and conjugation, syntax, idioms--in that order. Edited American English is a second language for the students in these classes and one which many of them resent having to learn. We also see this resentment in many of our internationals who cannot wait to "test out" (or in the American foreign language student who is required by his school or pressured by his parents to study another language).

Part of the frustration which the E.S.L. and Developmental students share is trying to say that for which they command too few words, phrases, and/or idioms. This is not a simple problem which will be solved by assigning one more vocabulary study. It goes far beyond word lists and translation exercises and strikes at the very raison d'etre of us all--our capability for self-expression. Each of us must witness, daily, destructive depressing, frustrating inadequacies of self-expression in our students. The effects can best be heard in the words of an international student who, after many failed attempts to write what he really meant, lamented, "But I write with all my spirit!" Spirit, indeed--with his entire being! Nothing about us is more personal and at the same time more public--than our use of language. Those who teach any language as a second language--including Edited American English--are faced with the task not only of teaching the language itself-- its system, conjugations, idioms--but also of helping each student to make that language a vibrant part of his being for the rest of his life so that he can express himself in it with "all his spirit" and know that people are hearing him--not a vocabulary list or a set of idioms which his teacher asked him to memorize. And we as teachers wait anxiously for that point in the semester when we realize--even before the student does--that his second language belongs to him--he can read, speak, and perform the ultimate, the master skill of any language: write--develop ideas on paper--with interest and facility.

What can we do to bring a student to this point? In the early stages of language learning, all students are, in fact, handicapped when they use the "new" language. If one heeds the advice--even briefly--of a teacher of the handicapped, he will soon learn that small, short term goals which are easily achievable--small successes early in the learning process--are what keep students and teachers, alike, eager to learn and away from too many discouraging learning experiences. Students of a foreign language need to know that they can use the new language today--use it well, without being the object of ridicule of their classmates or their teacher and, most importantly, to know that tomorrow is possible.

PART 2

Some rather simple "instant reward" devices which can be used quite frequently in Developmental Writing Classes for American students are:

1. Open-ended sentences--oral and written
2. Oral and written "progressive" compositions
3. Oral and written "stop-out" exercises

The open-ended sentence is used most effectively early in the course when the student's vocabulary is still extremely limited. The method is this: the teacher gives the "starter sentence," as I call it, (orally) to the class. Example: "Most people . . ." and calls on one student to complete it orally. The teacher must move rather quickly from student to student--at random--so that each student must have his ending to the sentence prepared at the same time--he does not know when the teacher will call on him. This exercise (1) involves much more than a simple pattern drill which requires only a one or two-word "completer." (2) It can have a simply-stated ending. (3) It leaves room for an infinite number of amusing, even philosophical observances on the part of the student. (4) Most importantly, it makes the student feel that he is somewhat free because (A) there is no "right answer", (B) he can express an idea of his own and, (C) he can use the second language effectively--even though the thought is short and not really developed to any great extent, he completed it and it is his.

The value of this kind of exercise is that it can put the majority of language students more at ease than they are in a traditionally-taught language class. As most of us who have studied a foreign language know, it takes years of speaking the language before we no longer have to use it in varying states of anxiety. There is always the nagging question, even though it may be a subconscious one: "Am I saying this correctly?" "Will someone correct me--or worse--say nothing and later scoff at my use of the language?"

Back to the exercise--the E.S.L. students, many times, will complete the "most people" sentence with ". . . in the United States" and add some observation about American people which has either shocked or interested them. "Most people in America are always in a hurry." They learn (1) sentence structure, (2) the fact that a "general truth" is stated in the present tense, and (3) that they can make a statement which shows that they are actually thinking in the new language and can do more than fill in the blank which was provided in a textbook exercise. They are creating their own language within the second language by putting their thoughts into it--in whatever simple way they may be doing it. The developmental students learn too, that they can make statements about "most people"; they can also be encouraged to speak standard English: "Most people, today, will steal from you if they can," rather than their usual "Most people will rip you off nowadays if they can swing it." (Language teachers of whatever language skill know that they must teach all the language skills, no matter what their course is labeled--writing, speaking, or reading.)

Exercises such as the "open-ended sentences," whether given in oral or written form, give the teacher the amount of control she needs. She is (1) directing the formation (structure) of the sentence, (2) controlling its idea--up to a point and (3) achieving this control without the student's realization. This is not to say that she is "tricking" the students--she is simply putting them more at ease so that they can operate within the new language while and at the

same time keeping them on safe, restricted ground and thus giving them a chance to succeed in a relatively non-threatening situation. Success breeds success!

The "progressive composition" is also effective with E.S.L. and development students. It can be best understood through an example:

> The teacher gives a topic sentence: "Learning a second language is fun and useful." One student after another completes the paragraph orally. Then each writes a part of the paragraph which is passed around the room. The teacher finally reads it aloud and the class criticizes it.

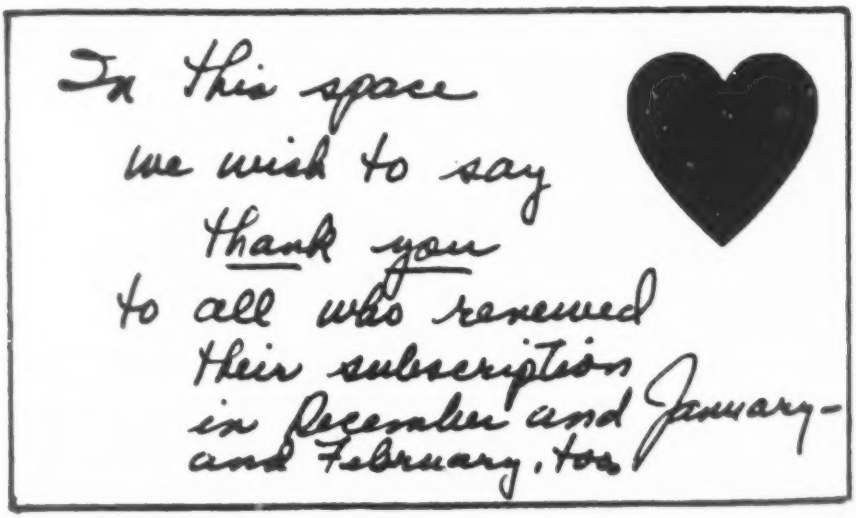
The important thing is to get the students to voice their ideas as they develop in the second language and to hear the process as the other students develop their thoughts. This works particularly well for Developmental Students who, for the most part, lack not only verbal skill, but logical thought progression as well.

The oral written "stop out" exercises--or "you supply the missing words and/or phrases" exercises work well for all three groups. Again, the teacher can put his students in a restricted, safe area, but the student does not feel so restricted because he has a choice and is forced to think in the second language.

Ex.: "Yesterday_____ went downtown shopping to buy_____
and also _____until nine o'clock!

This sentence has an infinite number of possibilities. It also forces the students to regard the second language as more than a de-coding process because they must think in the language in order to complete the thought--the missing parts of the sentence must not only be grammatically correct, but also logical.

Knowing that people can comprehend exactly what we are trying to tell them in oral or in written form is a very basic human need-a need which, if not satisfied, leaves us the most frustrated of creatures. I have found these exercises helpful in meeting my students' increasing need to communicate effectively, whether they're E.S.L and Developmental students are in separate classrooms or in one classroom.



ACADEMIC WRITING STANDARDS: A QUESTIONNAIRE

Ann M. Johns
San Diego State

English as a Second Language instructors preparing students to compete in academic environments are becoming increasingly concerned with the requirements and grading criteria of academic classes. We realize, and research has shown (see, e.g., Kroll: 1979), that some of the writing assignments which we--and most English teachers--require are not transferable to many academic classes. We also know that the grading which we do, based more on form than content, may not be similar to that done in other departments.

There have been a number of useful studies of academic writing requirements in addition to that by Kroll. I completed a study of all skill requirements in 1981. Lee's study (1978) was of the same nature. Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) recently finished a much more complete writing task survey, involving a number of universities, for ETS. Zemelman (1978) developed an interview procedure for determining academic tasks; Swales (1982) looked at one writing task, the essay examination, to discover what it demanded of the writer.

Others have examined the criteria used to assess writing competence. One of the most complete studies, by Dietrich (1974), involved untrained academic instructors and business people who evaluated 200 essays without a grading scale. They first divided the papers into three groups: good, average, and poor. Then, they recorded their reasons for their choices. The "What factors are most important..." question in my questionnaire (below) is based, in part, on the categories developed from the Dietrich study. Vann, Meyer and Lorenz (1984) looked at grading criteria from a different angle: they asked academic faculty to judge the gravity of ESL students' errors.

My questionnaire, included here, is an attempt to look at both task and grading criteria. It draws from the studies cited, as well as from Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), and from comments made by academic faculty involved in our Educational Opportunity Program Package Courses (see Laurel Corona's article entitled "The Skills That Cannot Wait" in the January 1984 issue of TECFORS).

My questionnaire was distributed to 250 randomly-selected academic (i.e., non-English) faculty at San Diego State University and all 200 contract faculty at City College, a San Diego community college with whom we have a writing program. I will discuss the results of this study at the TESOL Convention in April.

The purpose for my including the questionnaire in TECFORS is to encourage our readers to be a part of this study. I would like to ask any of you who are interested in the issues of academic tasks and grading criteria to distribute the questionnaire at your school, college or university and to send the results or the questionnaires to me. I have access to computer time, so I would be willing to have the results from your institution tallied, returned to you, and to include them in my results, to provide a broader response.

If you have questions or would like to participate, contact me c/o Academic Skills Center, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182. My office phone number is (619) 265-5477.

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Faculty Evaluation of Lower Division Student Writing

1. In what department are you teaching?_____

2. For how long have you been teaching at your school?_____

Please select one lower-division class which you teach, preferably one which has number of sections, and answer the questions below as they apply to this class:

3. How many students usually enroll for all sections of this course each semester? (Circle one) Less than 30 30-70 71-110 111-150 More than 150

4. Which types of writing do you assign in this class? (Circle one number for each item.)

		Frequently				Seldom
a.	Essay test responses	5	4	3	2	1
b.	Summaries of readings	5	4	3	2	1
c.	Term or research papers (How long?___)	5	4	3	2	1
d.	Laboratory reports/experiments	5	4	3	2	1
e.	Case studies	5	4	3	2	1
f.	Group writing assignments (what kind?) _____	5	4	3	2	1
g.	Letters or memos	5	4	3	2	1
h.	Instructions	5	4	3	2	1
i.	Observation reports	5	4	3	2	1
j.	Other _____	5	4	3	2	1

5. How many writing assignments are students asked to complete each semester? (Circle one) 1-3 4-6 7-9 More than 10

6. When completing their written work, which of the following are students most often asked to do? (Circle one for each item)

		Frequently				Seldom
a.	Make lists of concepts, ideas or events	5	4	3	2	1
b.	Summarize readings or lectures	5	4	3	2	1
c.	Compare or contrast one concept, idea or theory with others	5	4	3	2	1
d.	Apply models, principles or generalizations to a new situation	5	4	3	2	1
e.	Argue a position	5	4	3	2	1
f.	Analyze (break down information into constituent parts)	5	4	3	2	1
g.	Synthesize (produce something unique from what has been studied or observed)	5	4	3	2	1
h.	Evaluate, using internal evidence or external criteria	5	4	3	2	1
i.	Other_____	5	4	3	2	1

7. Which factors are most important in the evaluation of your students' writing? (Rank each factor by circling one number.)

	Frequently				Seldom
a. Ideas: each point is discussed well. Clear development	5	4	3	2	1
b. Organization: writing is organized well or according to an assigned model	5	4	3	2	1
c. Wording: correct terms for the discipline or class are employed	5	4	3	2	1
d. Unique viewpoint: a creative approach to the assignment is evident	5	4	3	2	1
e. Usage: the sentence structure is correct	5	4	3	2	1
f. Correct punctuation	5	4	3	2	1
g. Correct or acceptable spelling	5	4	3	2	1
h. Legible handwriting	5	4	3	2	1
i. Other_____	5	4	3	2	1

8. What pleases you most about the writing of the students in your classes?

_____

_____

9. What annoys or bothers you most about writtten work of your students?

_____

_____

10. Do ESL or foreign students have any special writing problems? If so, what are they?

_____

_____

11. Would you be willing to share a list of your writing assignments or criteria for grading them for your lower division class discussed above? If so, please enclose. This material will be kept separate from your questionnaire.

Your responses are anonymous; however, if you would like to receive a report of the results, write your name and department in the section below. This section will be immediately detached when the questionnaire is received and stored until all of the data has been analyzed. Reports will be distributed in January.

THANK YOU. PLEASE RETURN THIS TO ANN JOHNS, ACADEMIC SKILLS,

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Editors:

Ann M. Johns
Academic Skills and Linguistics
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-1900

Nancy V. Lee
Department of English
The University of Houston
Houston, TX 77004

Kerry Segel
Education Building 406
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712

Ann Daubney-Davis
Humanities Division
Houston Community College
P. O. Box 7849
Houston, TX 77270

This issue was typed by Theresa Schlosser, Debbie Lucadou, and Darla Selman.

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TECFORS

A newsletter for instructors of writing
and reading to ESL and bi-lingual (adult) students

Volume VIII March 1985 Number 2

ESL FOR THE DEAF: PART I, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE

D. Steinbach
Houston Community College

After the passage of recent legislation guaranteeing the handicapped access to higher education, deaf students began attending classes at Houston Community College. Interpreters accompanied students into the classroom, and standing beside the teacher, translated the instructor's lesson. This system worked well for those deaf students who had lost their hearing at an age after their language skills had been developed. The students who had become deaf as infants, however, had greater difficulties integrating into the mainstream, and their teachers soon determined that these students had inadequate English skills. As the students were all American-born, the obvious place for them seemed to be in English 1300, Developmental English Grammar and Composition(for native speakers). The students began attending these classes with their interpreters, but it became apparent that these students did not belong in a native-speaker program: their progress was far below that of the hearing students, and--more importantly--their errors were essentially the same as those of non-native speakers (no use of articles, misuse of tenses, etc.). Our deaf students were then tested with ESL testing instruments and placed into lower-level ESL classes. These classes, however, had a heavy focus on oral skills and as such were totally inappropriate for the deaf. Again, even with the aid of the interpreter, their progress was far below that of the rest of the class. It became obvious that a new approach was necessary to guarantee these students their civil right to an education. It was then decided to place as many deaf students as possible into a deaf-only setting, teaching them from an ESL syllabus tailored to their needs and learning rate. (This approach is used in only a small handful of schools around the country.) Our first signs of success in teaching ESL to the deaf came with this program, which is now in its second semester.

To understand the needs of our deaf ESL students, some background information concerning the deaf, their language, and deaf education is helpful. The students in this special ESL program have been deaf for most of their lives, and the majority became

deaf before the onset of productive speech development. Some are prelingually deaf, meaning that the onset of deafness occurred before the onset of any linguistic development. Prelingually deaf babies appear to develop normally through the babbling stage, but become silent at the stage when the first words are normally spoken. Other students are post-lingually deaf, meaning that they began life hearing speech sounds. While post-lingually deaf individuals are better able to produce spoken words, their actual creative mastery of English appears to be the same as that of the prelingually deaf. Some pre- and post-lingually deaf students also suffer from learning disabilities as a result of diseases such as Rubella or spinal meningitis.

Recent years have seen great strides in the education of deaf students in both elementary and secondary schools. This is mostly attributable to a growing recognition of ASL as a legitimate, linguistically viable language. Those of our students who were born to deaf parents are perfectly fluent in ASL, as it is the first language of all their family members. However, the majority of our students have not had the benefit of proper ASL training. Many of their parents have not learned to sign and even now may have to rely on teachers and other hearing members of the deaf community to communicate with their children. Moreover, the educational methods to which our students were exposed, particularly those used in mainstream schools, focused on communicative competence with the hearing world (lip-reading, speaking). While well-intentioned, these methods left most of our students virtually without a first language. They thus began their first ASL training as late as the early teens, well past puberty and the critical period for first language learning. One need only refer to the well-documented case study of Genie to realize the importance of the first language to all subsequent learning.

There are important differences between hearing and deaf ESL classrooms. In the hearing, linguistically heterogeneous ESL classroom, some students progress faster than others due to the fact that their native languages share common features (tenses, article systems) with English. Other students have a greater learning load. The important point to note is that all the students have solid first language skills which can transfer to the second language. Also, in most ESL classes, all communication takes place in the target language. In deaf ESL classrooms, however, communication is facilitated by an interpreter who translates the teacher's English into signed language. Optimally, the interpreter uses ASL, rather than signed English versions, as ASL is the students' native language. There are two major reasons for this. First of all, English is a spoken, not a signed language, and there is no need for students to sign English. Furthermore, students with poor ASL skills are often confused by the superimposing of English syntactic forms onto ASL. Another benefit of using ASL as the language of instruction is that the class can serve a dual function as a bilingual ESL/ASL course.

As aural/oral skills are dealt with by trained speech therapists, reading and writing are the only skills addressed in our ESL class for the deaf. Of these two, reading is decidedly more difficult. This is contrary to a popular misconception that deafness should not prevent one from reading English. The fallacy of this notion became apparent when we discovered that many of our deaf students had a very limited knowledge of English lexicon and syntax and no ability to "sound out" new vocabulary. Although they could "read" or visually interpret signs, they had no reading skills as we know

them to transfer from their native language.

This is a far-reaching handicap. Although an individual who is fluent in ASL has full access to abstract and creative linguistic material, the student without a complete first language is often limited to concrete, here-and-now expression. This student cannot develop those skills essential to the researching and analyzing processes on which the creative reading process is based. Furthermore, most researchers agree that reading can be defined as the superimposition of speech sounds on visual symbols. As deaf students have no auditory language on which to base their reading skills, these skills must develop hand-in-hand with the writing process.

As illustrated by the compositions at the end of the article, students' free writing often reflects the concrete, experiential nature of their sign language. Each word may exist as an element to complete an idea which is both graphic and concrete:

She like exercises healthy jump fun.

In addition, these students, having poor grammar skills in their native language (ASL), are unaware of the elemental constraints placed on the use of nouns, verbs, etc.

In a sense, the deaf signer faces many of the same difficulties as speakers of languages with ideographic writing systems. In ideographic systems, there is not a correspondence between the sounds used to express an idea verbally and the characters used to write the idea. Because of common first language skills, readers can impose the auditory image upon the ideographs; and the written passage, while not phonologically based, reflects the primary, spoken language. For the deaf student, the English writing system, which is stripped of its phonological significance, is comprised of ideographs, as is ASL. Yet the English writing system reflects an auditory system which these students do not have and possibly have no conception of. It is therefore obviously very difficult for the deaf student to relate to these written words as a systematic language. If they are unaware of the systematic nature of their own language, or if their ASL skills are so poor as to be rather unsystematic, they will be unable to comprehend the constraints of the English system. This becomes apparent when a student, during a lesson on the present continuous tense, generates sentences such as:

He eat cakeing now.

Without first language skills, it is almost impossible for students to correct such errors independently, as they cannot approach the problem in linguistic terms. As an example, the English sentence

The dog bit the boy.

can be signed either as

Dog bit boy.

or

Boy dog bit.

Unaware of the interrelationship of subject and object in his native language, one of our students demonstrated that he was attending to only the visual cue of sequence rather than meaning when unable to grasp the difference between the English sentences

The dog bit the boy.
The boy bit the dog.

until the sentences were acted out with the aid of pictures.

It is important to stress that students with fully developed ASL skills clearly recognize meaning in English sentences and can

use English syntactic rules to generate creative, correct sentences of their own. This ability depends on students' first language skills. Research has established that second language skills are based on those of the first language. The fact that this is also true for the deaf cannot be ignored. It is impossible to completely reverse our adult students' first language deficit, given the constraint of time. However, we feel that the all-deaf ESL classroom with an ASL interpreter is the best way both to teach English and to improve the students' ASL skills. After all, if we are to protect our students' rights to a higher education, they must be given access to a second language, but more importantly, to their first.

Sample compositions from ESL classes for the Deaf:

My Holidays

On December 31, I drove to see Loretta at her apt. We drove to three Clubs for Happy New Year's partey. Two of them were Go-Go girls and Go-Go boy. We dropped them and we decided to attend Holiday Inn. There were danced, movied and buffets. We drank Margaritas and Shegin [Sloe Gin]. We sat and watched Teenagers danced. We walked to get Buffet. It was decilious. The waitress served free Happy New Year's hats, whistles and champagne. In the midnight everyone hugged and drank more champagne. We says "Happy New Year 1985" on January 1. It was over at 4:30 A.M. We got home at 5:30 A.M. We enjoyed some funs and new friends. I droved home at 6:00 A.M. and go to bed until 12:30 P.M. I cooked the dinner for our family. We ate Black-eyed bean, steak and Green beans. We remember Black-eye bean is Good Luck in 1985.

Nr. 2

I will visit Jamaica. And I really like rich hotel. I want to buy various fashion clothes. I really like to eat rich to the restaurant. I want to go the dico dance. I enjoy to swim the big pool. I heard told me Jamaica is beautiful place. I want to ride Cadillic car. I hope Jamaica have many handsome man. I enjoy to go into the Club. I enjoy to look into the shopping. I enjov to play tennis and vollyball. I want to go to the beach. I want to stay Jamaica for two week.

Nr. 3

Than morining at 8:00 AM we walked to back open to school. I donit know where is my sixty-grade classroom. My teacher saw to rumor my shoulder. She said met to nice my first time open on Texas School for the Deaf.

My classroom is trouble because we were talked too play and throw a paper.

My teacher said stop it. She is very nice. We were like there teacher.

Part II will deal with the classroom methods we are developing to teach ESL to the deaf.

Editor's note: The ESL department at HCC is very eager to share ESL/deaf materials and curricula, and also to hear from ESL instructors or administrators at other institutions who are involved in teaching English to the deaf. Please contact

Joy Homick
Humanities
Houston Community College
P. O. Box 7849
Houston, TX 77270

A PLAN TO MAKE CORRECTING WRITING ERRORS ENJOYABLE: Implementing Peer Revision

Gwendolyn V. Charvis
Language & Culture Ctr.
University of Houston

A writing component, so important in an ESL student's mastery of the English language, can also involve long, tedious hours of the instructor's time spent correcting seemingly endless, often-repeated grammatical errors. Yet, students themselves can be a valuable source of information to others in the class, and tapping this resource is one key to the problem of correcting writing errors. The goal is not to remove the instructor from the correction and revision process, but rather to include students therein, based upon the assumption that learning is, at its best, a participatory process and that personal involvement in the exercise promotes and reinforces learning for the student. The following plan has been successfully used in upper-intermediate-level ESL classes but may be easily adapted to serve a variety of purposes and levels of English proficiency.

Preparation:

1. Do preliminary work: read through each student's essay. As you read, compile an error list by copying at least one imperfect sentence or item from each student's essay onto a separate sheet of paper. This list may be either hand-written or typewritten. Typewritten errors tend to be more obvious, but this can be considered either an advantage or a disadvantage. A sample sheet of errors is included for clarity.

2. Mark students' papers in your usual manner if you wish, but withhold marked papers from the students initially. Many instructors use correction symbols, which work well when utilizing this method.

3. Make copies of the error list to distribute to each member of the class.

Implementation:

1. Explain to the class the objectives of the lesson: to identify common errors and find correct alternatives with the aid of another person's perspective.

2. Pair students to work together on the error list, according to your own class composition. For example, if you have an ample cultural mix, you should pair students who do not speak the same native language. The reason for this pairing, although obvious to the instructor, may need to be explained to the students: that students of the same linguistic background tend to make the same types of errors, thus aiding each other only minimally when paired together. If your class, however, is fairly homogeneous, you may pair stronger with weaker students. Avoid threesomes; inevitably one of the three will do little contributing, gaining little from the exercise. If the class contains an odd number of students, you may choose to work with one of them individually. This is an opportune time for an instructor to help a student with specific deficiencies.

3. Set ground rules for the class:
   a. Do not seek to identify the author of any error. All errors are to be considered anonymous.
   b. Do not ridicule any error on the list. Explain that the exercise is designed to be corrective, not punitive, and that errors always look a bit ridiculous when committed by the other person.
   c. Work together with the assigned partner only on the error list. Try to agree on each item. Do not solicit information from other pairs of students. English dictionaries are permitted, but native language translation dictionaries are discouraged from use by students.
   d. Articulate ideas to the assigned partner. Those sitting quietly or working independently of partners are not complying with the stated goals of the lesson.

4. Set a reasonable time limit and control it attentively. Depending upon the length of your error list, you may allow more or less time. An easy guideline is to allow no more than two minutes per sentence. Thus, if your error list contains ten sentences, you should allow the students less than twenty minutes. Your judgment should prevail, in that you know the level of proficiency of the class, but again it is true that too much time will cause the students to become bored or lose interest in the lesson.

5. Circulate among student pairs to keep students alert and on target if you are not paired with an odd student. Offer as <u>little</u> personal help as possible, instead referring students to dictionaries, texts, and available reference material.

6. Call time and individually call upon each student to give his analysis and correction of one sentence or item from the list. Solicit other possibilities or correction of further errors from additional students as needed if time allows. Comment upon and further clarify the responses.

7. When all items have been sufficiently covered, return marked papers to students to be corrected or re-written according to your method. You may wish to assign the pairs of students to work together or to proofread the partners' second drafts before they are submitted to you.

8. Enjoy yourself and watch your students do likewise!

SAMPLE COMPOSITION ERRORS

This sample list of errors can be adapted in many ways. For example, you may wish to take entire paragraphs from student essays for analysis. If personal references are contained therein, such as names or countries, you may wish to change them so as to avoid identifying the writer and causing him personal embarrassment. The list of spelling and expression errors could be used as a springboard to a pronunciation exercise or a spelling test at a later date for reinforcement. It is a good idea to require students to keep the corrected error lists with their writing materials for review from time to time or as test material. The possibilities are countless.

1. I am in united states studying the english.
2. My family is consisting of my parent's, five brother's and one sister.
3. Two years after, the war burst in my country.
4. I keep in the bank my money for save it.
5. My father work hardly so he can to support many childrens.

Spelling and expressions

1. becides
2. finaly
3. mayoring
4. studing
5. countrys
6. in additional
7. wich
8. foriegn
9. goverment
10. appartament
11. alot of
12. in the other hand

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Editors:

Ann H. Johns
Academic Skills and Linguistics
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-1900

Nancy V. Lee
Department of English
University of Houston,U-Park
Houston, TX 77004

Kerry Segel
Education Building 406
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712

Ann Daubney-Davis
Humanities Division
Houston Community College
P. O. Box 7849
Houston, TX 77270

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AN INDIRECT MEASURE OF WRITING SKILLS FOR STUDENT PLACEMENT IN FRESHMAN AND PRE-FRESHMAN ESL COURSES

Joseph O. Davidson
University of Houston
University Park

PART I

As part of the orientation procedures for new international students at the University of Houston-University Park before their registration for classes, a "Placement Examination for Non-Native Speakers of English" is administered. Prior to the spring semester 1982, this examination consisted solely of a writing sample. Students were given a topic, generally requiring a process or a description essay, and asked to write for 20 minutes. A student's score on the essay determined his initial placement into the pre-freshman or freshman ESL courses. However, beginning in the spring of 1982, the essay was supplemented by a 40 item objective test. The purpose of this new test was twofold: to explore the validity and reliability of an indirect measure of writing skills fundamental to any freshman writing course, and to refine our ESL placement instrument. A spin-off benefit, if validity and reliability correlations proved high, would be the availability of a machine-scorable instrument for use on occasions when there was insufficient number of trained essay readers or when an unusually short turnaround time was required.

Construction of the instrument reported in this paper began during the fall of 1980. Professor Robert B. Kaplan, Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Southern California and Visiting Professor at the University of Houston-University Park for the academic year 1980-81, assembled a group of ESL teachers and graduate students, provided them with ideas about the nature of written text in English and specific suggestions for item types, and then charged them with the

responsibility of writing 40-50 such items. When they had gathered and revised a pool of 40 items, they tested these items during the spring of 1981 on freshman level native and and non-native speaking populations. Item analyses and psychometric data derived from these administrations resulted in modifications of some items. Then the revised test, containing 39 items, was administered near the end of the spring semester to a different non-native speaking population (all at the University of Houston-University Park). A second item analysis and a review of psychometric information derived from the results of the test were done at the University of Southern California. Again, certain changes were suggested: in particular, the test was brought back up to 40 items, and the number of alternatives for each item was decreased from 4 to 3. In Houston, the second revision was used as part of the "Placement Examination for Non-Native Speakers of English" in January 1982 during orientation week (N=276). A month later it was tested on a group (N=93) of freshman level native speakers. A third administration occurred at the University of Southern California on a truncated non-native speaking population (N=35, all at the advanced institute level). Since these initial administrations, over 2,500 students have sat for the examination.

In PART I of this paper, I will discuss and illustrate the item types; in PART II I will discuss the validity and reliability studies performed on the results of these various administrations.

The test is composed of eight item types: text-diagram/chart correlation; spatially, chronologically, or heuristically structured texts with one sentence deleted; topicalization; cohesion; topic sentence recognition; coherence; and outlining.

The first item type is composed of a chart or diagram with three short alternative texts. Students are instructed to choose the response which most accurately reflects information found in the chart or diagram. They must interpret the information correctly and not draw unwarranted conclusions; this ability is a particularly crucial skill in writing research essays. A variation of this item is the opposite: a short text with three alternative charts or diagrams. The student is instructed to choose the chart or diagram which most accurately reflects the information provided in the text.

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE I

Effects of Engineering Faculty Shortages in the U.S., Sept. 1981

	Public Schools	Private Schools	All Schools
Reduction in research	33.8%	29.7%	32.5%
Increase in teaching load	76.3%	59.5%	70.8%
Greater reliance on teaching assistants or part-time faculty	75.0%	62.2%	71.7%
Course not offered	46.3%	48.6%	47.8%
No significant effect	5.0%	8.1%	5.8%

a. Because equipment obsolescence plagues virtually all engineering schools in the U.S., nearly one-third of all schools have experienced a reduction in research.
b. Over half the engineering faculties at private schools in the U.S. have had their teaching loads increased.
c. MIT and Stanford Universities are buffered from the engineering faculty crisis because neighboring high-tech businesses (the thriving silicon-based

industries) have spurred growing, productive local economies.

A second item type deals with spatially, chronologically or heuristically structured texts with one sentence deleted. For example, a heuristically structured text could be a syllogism with the major and minor premises given. The student is instructed to choose the conclusion which logically fills the blank. In the example below, the three responses turn on the meaning of the modals must, may and should. Spatial and chronological texts also test a student's understanding of what information is needed to fill a given blank so as to logically precede and/or follow what is given.

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 2

All members of President Eisenhower's cabinet were Republicans. E.T. Benson was a Republican. _____.

a. Therefore, E.T. Benson may have been a member of President Eisenhower's cabinet.
b. Therefore, E.T. Benson must have been a member of President Eisenhower's cabinet.
c. Therefore, E.T. Benson should have been a member of President Eisenhower's cabinet.

The third item type illustrates topicalization. Students are given one sentence followed by a blank and instructed to choose the sentence from among three alternatives which best follows what has been topicalized in the first sentence. The given sentence in the sample item below, an equational statement joined by the copula, contains an appositive with an embedded clause. Alternative b, that both the coati and the raccoon have facial masks and ringed tails, comments on information found in both the main clause and the embedded clause, and as such, is clearly unacceptable. Alternative c refers back to the first member of the equational statement ("the coati") but only indirectly to the second member; that is, the fact that it roams isolated southern Arizona mountain ranges may or may not be wholly or partly responsible for its popular and scientific near-anonimity. The causal link there is not as clear as it is in alternative a, where the anaphoric referent this, a cohesive device, unambiguously links a topic (the popular and scientific scarcity of knowledge about the coati) with its comment (a variety of reasons can account for this).

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 3

The coati, a member of a New World family of medium-sized carnivores which includes the raccoon, is both popularly and scientifically among the least known and observed of our native mammals. _____.

a. There are a variety of reasons for this neglect.
b. Both have facial masks and ringed tails.
c. In the United States, it roams a series of isolated mountain ranges in southern Arizona.

The fourth item type contains two simple sentences followed by a blank and a third sentence. Students are instructed to choose the response which best combines the first two sentences so as to logically precede the third sentence. In other words, they are to choose the response which embeds or subordinates the information not in focus. Since the given third sentence focuses on "these concerns," only response b has the appropriate information topicalized.

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 4

Archaeologists excavate human burials.
Archaeologists try to respect the religious and spiritual concerns of indigenous groups.
_____. These concerns almost always involve what the indigenous group perceives as the desecration of ancestral remains.

a. Archaeologists, who try to respect the religious and spiritual concerns of indigenous groups, excavate human burials.
b. Archaeologists, who excavate human burials, try to respect the religious and spiritual concerns of indigenous groups.
c. Although archaeologists try to respect the religious and spiritual concerns of indigenous groups, they excavate human burials.

The fifth item type is a short paragraph with three blanks where cohesive elements (grammatical and lexical) have been deleted. Students are instructed to choose the response for each blank which best completes the meaning of the text. The first and second blanks deal with conjunctive cohesion, while the third tests lexical cohesion

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 5

Key to the operation of Artificial Intelligence systems is a radically new style of computer programming. Conventional programs instruct a computer to solve a problem by following a rigidly predetermined sequence of steps called an algorithm, __(1)__ many problems are too complex to fit this algorithmic straightjacket: step-by-step solutions are either unknown or too inefficient even for a fantastically fast machine like a modern digital computer. __(2)__ AI systems use knowledge about a problem to suggest shortcut solutions--a technique known as heuristic problem solving. Because knowledge is key to __(3)__, AI researchers have developed methods (basically formalizations of natural language) for efficiently representing and processing facts and ideas on a computer.

1. a. recently
   b. otherwise
   c. but
2. a. Because
   b. As a result
   c. Provided that
3. a. this technique
   b. these conventional programs
   c. this algorithmic straightjacket

Cohesion is semantic in nature and refers to the relations of meaning that exist within a text and that define it as a text. Item types 3, 4, and 5 all challenge a student's under-

standing of how the closely related notions of topicalization and cohesion are achieved in an English text.

In item type 6, a blank, representing a deleted topic sentence, is followed by a paragraph, and the student is instructed to choose the response which would best serve as a topic sentence for that paragraph. The sample paragraph below deals with Bernabe Cobo, Jesuit author of the monumental Historia del Nuevo Mundo and missionary among the Peruvian Indians from 1609 to 1629. Distractors include a, which rightly states that Cobo spent much of his life in the New World but wrongly concludes that he was a restless adventurer, and b, which is "off the wall," because it speaks to an aspect of Cobo unrelated to the topic of the paragraph.

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 6

_____.

Born in southern Spain, he spent a year on Hispaniola before continuing on to Peru in 1599. He was to remain in Peru for the rest of his life, except for a trip to New Spain between 1629 and 1642. Cobo was educated as a Jesuit and did extensive missionary work with the Peruvian Indians at intervals from 1609 through 1629. During his sojourn in New Spain and thereafter in Peru, he spent much of his time in the capital cities of Mexico City and Lima doing research in archives and libraries for his monumental Historia del Nuevo Mundo (History of the New World), which he finally completed in 1653.

a. Bernabe Cobo (1580-1657) was a restless adventurer who spent a good portion of his life in the New World.
b. Bernabe Cobo (1580-1657) is best known today for his dedication to scientific and historical facts and his opposition to introducing miracles to solve historical problems.
c. Bernabe Cobo (1580-1657) became one of the New World's outstanding historians.

In a sense, items such as 6 test the same writing skill, topicalization, as those typified by 3. The length of the text differs, of course, but in each instance the student is being challenged to analyze a text and either (1) to determine its topic or (2) to determine its topic and then to choose cohesive and coherent follow-up information.

Item type 7 deals specifically with text coherence. Students are told that sentences in the paragraph are not in their proper order. They are instructed to choose the order which yields the most coherent paragraph. Such "scrambled paragraphs" test a student's ability to perceive the smooth and logical flow of ideas in a text--that flow being aided largely by grammatical and lexical cohesive devices.

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 7

(1) The baby had Downs syndrome, a genetic condition normally causing some degree of mental retardation. (2) On April 15, 1982, a baby died in Bloomington, Indiana. (3) Without surgery the baby could not eat. (4) But it also had an opening between the windpipe and the esophagus, the tube that passes

food from the mouth to the stomach, requiring surgery. (5) It died because its parents, with the concurrence of their physician and the courts, decided that letting it die was the humane thing to do. (6) Many people were outraged, convinced that this baby was allowed to die simply because it was born with Downs syndrome and therefore destined to a life of mental retardation.

a. 2, 5, 1, 4, 3, 6
b. 6, 5, 1, 4, 3, 2
c. 2, 1, 4, 5, 6, 3

The final item type deals with outlining. Students are given a brief paragraph and instructed to choose the response which correctly outlines the paragraph. Granted that in freshman composition and rhetoric courses, outlining is often based on complete essays, not on brief paragraphs; nevertheless, paragraphs within essays must be analyzed and outlined as part of the overall structure. Items of this type challenge a student's ability to separate primary from secondary ideas and to sort out strategic information from structural.

EXAMPLE OF ITEM TYPE 8

Although the term smog originally was intended to identify a mixture of smoke and fog, it is commonly used to describe any body of polluted air that may be a hazard to human health. Such hazards may range from simple irritation of the eyes to serious aggravation of respiratory and circulatory disorders. Researchers at the California Institute of Technology reproduced smog in the laboratory. The smog was created by exposing gasoline vapors and exhaust fumes to sunlight, demonstrating the role of the gasoline engine in air pollution. The research also showed that fumes trapped near the ground by an inversion layer are converted by energy from the sun into other noxious chemicals which contribute to air pollution.

a. I. Smog
   A. Original meaning: a mixture of smoke and fog
   B. Current usage: any body of polluted air hazardous to human health
   C. Hazards
      1. Eye irritation
      2. Aggravation of respiratory and circulatory disorders
   II. Smog research at the California Institute of Technology
   A. The role of the gasoline engine in air pollution
   B. The role of the inversion layer in air pollution

b. I. Smog
   A. Original meaning: a mixture of smoke and fog
   B. Current usage: any body of polluted air hazardous to human health.
   II. Hazards
   A. Eye irritation
   B. Aggravation of respiratory and circulatory disorders
   C. Smog research at the California Institute of Technology
      1. The role of the gasoline engine in air pollution

2. The role of the inversion layer in air pollution

c. I. Smog
   A. Original meaning: a mixture of smoke and fog
   B. Current usage: any body of polluted air hazardous to human health

II. Hazards
   A. Eye irritation
   B. Aggravation of respiratory and circulatory disorders

III. Smog research at the California Institute of Technology
   A. The role of the gasoline engine in air pollution
   B. The role of the inversion layer in air pollution

TIME FOR THE BASIC BASICS: ONE-TO-ONE CONFERENCING WITH E.S.L. STUDENTS

Patricia Johnson
San Diego State Univ.

The basic basic skills in student writing are not so much correctness of form as emotional attitudes toward the writing process. Confidence and caring, "the two C's," are the prime ingredients of success. The principle, of course, is not new. It is supported both by the intuition of individual teachers and a good deal of research over the past decade, and few educators would disagree that students, whether Developmental, E.S.L., or experienced native speakers, write better when they practice writing with confidence something they care about saying. How to encourage these skills is another matter -- especially with E.S.L. students, many of whom like to keep low profiles in the classroom. In my earlier teaching days I never felt that enough of my students accomplished this first crucial step until I discovered one-to-one conferencing.

Seven years ago I attended a workshop in student conferencing conducted by Roger Garrison of Westbrook College, Portland, Maine. His assertion that working individually not only allowed the instructor to determine individual student needs but prompted the students to write more purposefully inspired me to try his approach the following semester. It seems worthwhile to record my efforts here since colleagues often ask me how my system "works."

At first it wasn't easy. Many of my students did not take to solo discussions as readily as Garrison's more proficient, medically oriented students; for some a conference was the same thing as a confrontation. Besides, my approach was random. The ten-minute conference often ran way overtime (although Garrison had promised effective five-minute conferences!); some students, intimidated by the instructor in the role of friend and counselor, wandered off to the comfort and security of less cozy learning situations; others simply wandered off for days, later muddling me with irregular and surprising reappearances when I had crossed them off my roll

(I worked from my office, leaving the classroom as a student workplace only, empty of authority); still others, apparently pained by the dereliction of duty, pestered me with questions in the midst of conferences with other students. Why wasn't I in the classroom? When was I going to teach grammar? What were they to do during class time?

I might have given up then, had not the majority of my students who bore with me performed as well in the departmental exams as those in previous classes and, in addition, expressed enthusiasm in their class evaluations about the personal caring for their writing exhibited in the conferences. I felt emboldened to carry on.

Now my students, including E.S.L.'s, and I have arrived at a more systematic approach which may help others avoid some of the initial pain and confusion.

I first mark on my calendar class and conference days -- roughly four days of ten- to fifteen-minute conferences to two days spent in class where we hold group discussions, share papers and perform practice exams. Next I eliminate as much confusion as possible by setting up simple housekeeping rules with my students who are directed to:

1. Keep everything they write, including rough notes, in folders which are to be brought to each conference. (In these I record their attendance at conferences, briefly log key conference issues and keep a record of completed essays. I find that putting the students in charge of their own work and records puts the burden of responsibility for the writing itself where it belongs -- on the writer. It sounds a little hazardous, but in seven years only three students have lost folders!)
2. Watch the bulletin board outside my office for the conference schedule so each student knows exactly when to attend. (Previously students simply picked a number from a stack in the classroom, but this caused muddles and reduced the students to mere numbers -- counter-productive!)
3. Regard conference days as class days and plan to utilize the class time to do writing or to use learning materials for "lab work" assigned in conference and available in the lab.

Then come pedagogical goals and philosophies. I carefully cover and discuss the following concerns and supplement it with a handout:

1. The Purpose of the Conference --
   a. To help students first to discover skills they already have.
   b. To try out their writing on an experienced "live audience."
   c. To help them find a significant central issue which they care about enough to communicate to a "real world" reader who is not the teacher.

d. To provide students with an opportunity to ask any questions they may hesitate to raise in class.

2. The Function of Revision --

   a. To "resee" an idea which already has merit from the point of view of the needs and wishes of a particular reader.

   b. To recreate less successful earlier attempts at writing after acquiring sharper skills.

3. What Revision is NOT --

   a. A punishment for bad writing.

   b. A simple correction of minor errors.

4. The Instructor's Role --

   a. To function as a writing coach, helping students to discover and shape what they want to say rather than doing it for them.

   b. To act as a constructive critic rather than a judge. Thus I assign no grades and make no written comments on any paper. But I will at any time tell my writers how their writing measures up to the standards required in the departmental final exam. However, it is unreasonable to assign grades to the process of writing. No one should be judged for practicing.

   c. To be an experienced editor, alerting writers to grammatical and other errors for final drafts.

4. The Student Writer's Role --

   a. To be themselves responsible for marking their papers -- making marginal notations and text corrections as a guide to revision.

   b. To perform writing assignments as given in class and conferences.

   c. To be willing to engage in dialogue with the coach during conferences and not to be afraid to speak up if what they say or write seems to be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

In addition I tell my students in what order the writing skills are taught -- beginning with "having something to say" and ending with "say it with polish and correctness." I alert them to the fact that we do not move into learning the next skill until the previous one has been mastered. This helps quench anxiety about sentence drills and grammar.

Usually in the second week of classes I schedule my first conferences and embark on procedures for establishing confidence and caring. Let's take a close look at a first conference with Vietnamese student, Lanh.

I have prepared the first batch of papers, asking the students to discuss their experiences in and attitudes toward writing, but I have not written on them. I don't take out Lanh's paper immediately but take a few minutes to get

aquainted. I find she left Vietnam for America five years ago and has been learning English for six. I compliment her quite sincerely on her fluency, which is considerable, and tell her that her skill shows in her paper, which I enjoyed reading. She lights up in pleased surprise --

"But there are so many mistakes . . . !"

"That's what I'm here to help you with. But first let's look at what you have to say before we concern ourselves with how you say it."

Lanh's paper lists several kinds of writing and expresses the view that English is very difficult and the writer pledges herself to work hard to improve. There is no real focus and little purpose to the writing other than a demonstration of a politely reasonable response to the assignment; there is practically no development, and E.S.L. problems with syntax and vocabulary, as might be expected, show. The grammar is quite good with the exception of some verb forms. Much of the syntactical awkwardness might be a function of not really knowing what to say rather than a lack of skill. At this point it is hard to tell.

Since I have looked at this paper ahead of time (the rest I will respond to spontaneously), I can relieve her anxiety quickly.

"I like the way you express a willingness to work hard, Lahn. You should do well. I also like the way you talk about the various kinds of writing; it shows you were really thinking about your topic -- and your command of English is good."

She smiles and visibly relaxes, and I take advantage of this to address the question of purpose.

"Can you tell me who might be an audience for this paper besides me?"

She looks puzzled, "I don't think -- I really understand."

"Let's put it this way. You know, I'm not really the best audience for this paper, not really the person it's designed for. You see I really know about English's being frustrating, so if that's what you were wanting to put across, you wouldn't really be wanting to say that to me, would you?"

"You mean I should think of someone who really needs to know?"

"Yes."

"Oh-h--but--" doubtfully, "It's difficult. I don't really know who."

"Maybe because what you chose to say wasn't all that important to you. It's hard to find an audience for something you don't really care about. Do you think another topic would help?"

"Well, yes -- perhaps --." But at this point she is still being simply polite. She is not sure.

"Suppose I give you the option to find an audience for your first essay, or to select a new topic -- one of your own, or one from this li c?"

Lahn brightens at the familiar prop -- the dittoed sheet, and begins to scrutinize it. I ask her to write the assignment in her folder. After doing so she looks thoughtful and, pointing a topic on the dittoed sheet, "Write about an object of importance to you," offers this.

"I loved to play with a special piece of wood when I was a little girl. It was very ordinary, but it was important to me. Maybe American people would be surprised and interested to know about that. American children have so many topys and they are <u>real</u>."

I am enthusiastic. "Yes! That's an excellent idea. Now you have the audience in mind, you will know how to tell your story. I'll look forward to reading your piece."

This has been a good conference. Lahn's confidence has been raised, and she leaves with a clearer idea of what she is going to do.

At her next conference I am not disappointed. Lahn has abandoned the empty generalities of her first essay. This piece has a sense of audience and a surprising facility with the language which had not shown up in her first attempt. Lahn describes how the simple piece of wood became a precious object in her mind and a catalyst for childhood flights of fancy. Here is the opening paragraph:

> Like anyone else in the world -- like any kid -- when I was ten, I had a treasure sack. My treasure contained half dozen paperbacks, children's story books, a collection of miscellaneous stuff, and most special, a piece of wood about fifteen centimeters long. This piece of wood I considered the most valuable possession I ever had. Today, I no longer have it. But I can still picture its loveliness, and feel how deeply it meant so much for me.

Obviously she cares for her topic. Obviously she cares enough to say it well, to the best of her considerable ability, and has taken the trouble to be as correct as possible although this was not part of the assignment.

Since she had done this much so quickly it was not difficult to suggest to Lahn that a third paragraph about her sister was not clearly related to her purpose. In this case all that was necessary was an additional explanatory sentence added to her third draft. With this measure of success Lahn was ready for a more challenging assignment. I assigned her an argument -- again stressing the importance of her audience and the need to really care about what she had to say.

Of course, few students respond as rapidly as Lahn. Not many have her level of langauge skill to begin with. But the point is that unless the student is encouraged to care first and correct later, neither the instructor nor the student has much idea of what skills the writer may have hidden beneath anxiety and misconceptions.

There are still the questions of what to do when. What, for example, does one do when a student simply slavishly follows the format of a writing model, usually not too well, and avoids exploring forms to suit his purpose? I usually com-

pliment the student for his concern, jokingly reprimand him for "playing too safe" and give him an assignment which requires a freer form such as a dialogue, a personal letter, or a journal entry.

And what about that worst problem, the writer who can't "think of anything to say"? I insist that the student keep a daily log of things which are important to him. These can be anything from a morning shower to getting good grades. The stipulation is that he must explore the reasons for his caring so that he could defend it to someone else. In responding to these in conference with real interest, I help the student to understand that nothing with real importance to the writer is ever inconsequential; the challenge in writing is to get that across to the reader. This seems to be most helpful in dissipating lack of confidence, which is probably the chief cause of writer's block in the first place.

And so, though each student differs, the basic conference format is the same. Until the writer is reasonably proficient in the two C's, I avoid going on to other skills. Once the basic basics are learned, the rest follows more swiftly and surely. Whether the lesson takes two weeks or two semesters it is still worth the time.

LINKING WRITING JOURNALS TO WRITING IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: PART I

Ilona Leki
Univ. of Tennessee

In an article published in 1979, eminent British teacher of composition, literature, and linguistics James Britton distinguishes three functions of writing: expressive, transactional, and poetic. The expressive form, Britton says, "relies on an interest in the speaker (or writer) as well as in what he has to say about the world. We called it utterance that 'is not projected very far from the speaker' ... revealing, for example, the speaker's attitude towards his message, towards his listener and towards his present state of mind, himself. Expressive forms of speech capitalize on the fact that both speaker and listener are present: expressive writing simulates that co-presence, the writer invoking the presence of the reader as he writes . . . " (Britton, p. 123-24). Transactional writing is characterized as more clearly aimed at the world, at the reader; it gives information, persuades, explains. Poetic writing includes all forms of literature. More important than these categories, however, is Britton's contention that expressive writing is the "matrix from which the other two categories would develop" (Britton, p. 125). In other words, writers begin in the expressive mode, and their writing evolves toward transactional and poetric forms for which the expressive mode serves as a necessary base. Because in the expressive mode the writer is relaxed and relies confidently on the good will of the reader, expressive writing takes risks, ventures into uncharted areas to explore new ideas, and tests these new ideas for their potential yield. Thus, Britton suggests that "expressive writing has an important role to play in the initial stage of grappling with new concepts" (Britton, p. 126).

Clearly, we as composition teachers are concurring with Britton's claim for the power of expressive writing when we teach and encourage our students to use prewriting techniques to help themselves discover what it is they may have to say on a particular topic. On the other hand, one outlet for expressive writing which is under-utilized in ESL composition courses is the writing journal. Our colleagues teaching freshman English composition as well as literature classes to native speakers have long known and exploited the advantages of writing journals. While ESL teachers have also experimented with various types of journals, perhaps our under-exploitation of this resource stems from the problems inherent in the forms of journals we have used.

For several years the dialogue journal has been discussed in our profession as a method of getting our students writing something meaningful without feeling intimidated. Errors in English are not noted; the journals are not marked in red or graded. In this method the students write in class for varying lengths of time (five to twenty minutes) on any subject they might be concerned with at that moment. These journal entries are collected up by the teacher, who responds to what each student has written and returns the journals. The students then continue the dialogue by reading the teacher's comments and responding in turn. The teacher's responses consist of questions, comments, expressions of concern, whatever might seem an appropriate response for one human being communicating with another rather than for a teacher reading and judging the work of a student. While these dialogue journals are indeed

wonderful means of nurturing students' budding ability to communicate on paper in English and while these journals do promote a form of humanistic interaction in the classroom, they can be quite time-consuming, particularly if the teacher feels compelled to try to match the length of the student's entry. Furthermore, a note of insincerity can creep into this interchange when the teacher, in pure self-defense, begins to comment more and more briefly and the comments begin to consist increasingly exclusively of statements of approval and open-ended questions encouraging the students to write more: "That's very interesting, Jose. Tell me more about your sister. How long has she lived in New York? How does she like it?" This type of response rings false. Worse, students then seem to feel compelled to answer the questions out of a sense of courtesy despite the injunction to write only what they feel like writing and despite their lack of interest in continuing the dialogue in the direction the teacher's questions may be taking it.

A second form of journal writing is perhaps more appropriately called writing a diary. Here students once again write whatever they like; again there is no correction made of anything the students write. In diary writing the subject for entries is very often the events of the student's day: "I had a test in biology today, and I think I did OK. Ahmad stopped by in the evening and we ordered a pizza from Dina's. This restaurant is getting more expensive every day, it seems." While there is certainly some value to a foreign student, or anyone perhaps, in keeping a log of daily activities for "historical" purposes, this type of writing leads nowhere in terms of providing material for intellectual stimulation; and since the subject is every day life, the students are unlikely to be experimenting in English. Given the mundane subject matter of this form of journal, students are more likely to merely recycle old vocabulary and sentence structures from first year English and perhaps to become bored with the content of these diaries as well as with the need to maintain them. Furthermore, following Britton's analysis, although expressive writing exists in mature form such as letter writing, expressive writing is more characteristically a developmental form; the whole point of encouraging our students to relax within the expressive mode of writing is to prepare them for the other modes, actually, the transactional mode, which our students will be called upon to use most often in the academic or in the work world. Diaries offer little in the way of a starting point toward more mature forms of writing.

In their excellent article on student-teacher working journals, Spack and Sadow (1983) suggest another form of journal writing. In their system each student submits a journal entry at each class meeting which extends and comments upon recent classwork. The teacher reads these journals, comments on them individually, and then writes a journal entry of her own, which she duplicates and distributes to each class member at the next class meeting and in which she includes entries or parts of entries which were written by the students and which she thinks are interesting enough to be brought to the attention of the entire class. While this method has brought Spack and Sadow satisfying results, any technique that adds to already heavy paper loads may cause writing teachers to shy away from considering it.

If we, however, concede the notion that expressive writing operates as a heuristic and at the same time constitutes a phase in the development of a writer's skill, then what is the best way to use this insight in our writing classes and get our students to use expressive writing in a

way that will help them discover and will help them develop without placing additional burdens on the writing teacher? The writing journal described here has two aims: to promote fluency and to gather ideas for potential development in a formal composition for their writing class. Furthermore, this system does not add to the teacher's work load. In this system students write a prescribed number of times per week for a prescribed amount of time. It is quite important to settle upon specific amounts of time and to insist that students write non-stop during that time. Students must write long enough at one stretch so that ideas begin to flow in a form of writing uncensored by any internal grammar monitor. Yet, the decision on the amount of time spent writing per session should also be informed by sensitivity to the students' situation, i.e., the amount of time they have available and can tolerate sitting and writing. Similarly, the students should write often enough so that the journal is in some weak way constantly present in the backs of their minds and becomes an automatic part of the students' regular activities but not so often that writing in the journal becomes a real burden. My students, who are full-time students at the university, write three times a week for twenty minutes.

Sitting for a minute or two just before beginning to write, relaxing and emptying the mind, helps to prepare for the task. Essentially a free-writing task, to be most effective in stimulating a flow of ideas, each journal entry ought to be done at one sitting at a place where the student will not be interrupted for the 20 consecutive minutes he/she must write. Students are told that if they run out of things to say on their topic they should nevertheless continue to write either on the next topic that comes to mind or, if they completely hit a zero, to "describe the zero" (Davis and Dornan or whoever).

In Part II the author will describe how she uses journal writing with her ESL students.

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Editors:

Ann H. Johns
Academic Skills and Linguistics
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-1900

Nancy V. Lee
Department of English
University of Houston,U-Park
Houston, TX 77004

Kerry Segel
Education Building 406
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712

Ann Daubney-Davis
Humanities Division
Houston Community College
P. O. Box 7849
Houston, TX 77270

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LINKING WRITING JOURNALS TO WRITING IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: PART II

Ilona Leki
Univ. of Tennessee-
Knoxville

In Part I Dr. Leki discussed the literature on journal writing. Now in Part II she provides specific plans and activities for journal writing in the ESL classroom.

Journals may be written in class in a free-writing manner for an uninterrupted period of 20 minutes. This journal writing is to be seen as an un-premeditated opening into the premeditated writing done for composition classes. This opening takes the form of an idea bank. It is helpful to reassure students that one of the biggest problems writers, from students to professionals, have is to find something worth writing about. Actually, the ideas, emotions, insights, speculations, and comparisons form themselves in our minds continuously as we walk to school, wash dishes, wait in line at the post office. The question is how to recapture these topics and use them in formal compositions. The journal becomes a storehouse for these experiences, perceptions, and opinions as well as the place to experiment with English without worrying about making errors. An analogy with an artist's sketchbook helps explain the concept behind the working journal. Although the artist notices many interesting scenes around her all day long, she cannot develop these scenes into a finished painting immediately. Therefore, she may make a drawing of that scene and store the drawing in her sketch file. At some later time she may come back to that file and look through it for ideas for a complete painting. Many of the sketches will never be developed into full paintings and will only have been useful as a valuable practice at the time she made the sketch. On the other hand, this artist may find something in her sketchbook that stimulates her imagination and that she wants to explore further in a full painting. Like the artist's sketches, probably most of the students' journal entries will never turn into a formal composition, but in the entries there may be seeds which might eventually turn into a writing project.

Part of the frustration with dialogue-journals and diaries is that it is never obvious what the connection may be between this writing work and the work students will be doing in writing classes. To avoid this problem and to give the students somewhere to begin when they sit down to write three times a week, a list of suggested subjects for journal entries is developed and provided to the students. Very few textbooks provide such suggestions and particularly very few ESL textbooks even seem to have noted the possibility of ESL students keeping a journal. One exception among ESL composition texts is a new composition book by Tucker and Costello (The Random House Writing Courses for ESL Students, 1985). Here the authors do make suggestions for journal entries, quite interesting and useful ones. The following are some suggestions drawn from the Tucker/Costello book and various composition texts[1] written for native speakers as well as ideas developed specifically for my own courses. The point is not that the students should take these suggestions necessarily as topics to write on but rather that they allow their minds to be stimulated by these suggestions and to move their 20 minutes of free-writing in whatever direction seems the most fruitful or interesting. By the same token, the questions in these suggestions are meant to stimulate thought; each question need not be answered. Each suggestion below is intended to stimulate one journal entry.

1. Take 10 minutes and list all the places that are important to you in your life right now. Spend the rest of the time writing a line or two about each one identifying the place or briefly noting its significance to you.

2. (Follow up suggestion) Look back at your list from your last entry. Choose one place (or two) and write about it for 20 minutes. Why is it important to you? How do you feel when you are there? Who else is there? How do they make you feel? What does it look like? How does it smell? What sounds do you hear? What is the temperature like?

3. For 10 minutes make a list of all the people who are important in your life right now. Add a line or two of comment for each one.

4. Choose one of the people you listed in the previous entry and describe that person in detail. What does he/she look like? What kind of personality does he/she have? How does he/she make you feel? How often do you see each other? What do you usually do when you are together? What do you talk about? Why is this person important to you? Who does this person remind you of? How did you meet?

5. What is your first memory? Describe in detail everything you remember about that time or that incident. Who was there? Where was it? What did people say? How did you feel?

6. When you think of a specific time of day, like Saturday night or Sunday morning, what associations come to your

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[1] The ideas for suggestions 1-4 need to be credited to the book by Charles W. Dawe and Edward A. Dorman; and the ideas for suggestions 6, 11, 12, and 14 can be found in the book by Amy Tucker and Jacqueline Costello. Both books are cited in the references at the end of this article.

mind? What are you doing on that day at that time? What do you wish you were doing? Who are you with? How do you feel? What do you see, hear, smell around you?

7. What are the important disputes in your major field of study right now? Make a list of these questions or issues. In your field, is there anything the experts are trying to convince the non-experts of? List these.

8. What is a 7-year-old child's school day like in your country? Should children be pushed to learn a lot when they are very young, when they do not yet know enough to rebel, when they are best at learning certain things (like languages, for instance)? Or should childhood be more a time of little responsibility devoted mainly to play and relaxation?

9. What responsibilities do schools have in teaching children something besides academic subjects? What else should children get from school? Moral training, religious training, sex education, a sense of patriotism, of community spirit, or competition? What else do schools in fact teach children? Respect for authority?

10. Have you noticed any differences between what is considered good writing style in the U.S. and what is considered good writing style in your language? What constitutes good writing in your language? What did your teachers tell you about the type of vocabulary you should use, the kinds of sentences, the way to organize your ideas, the types of subjects to write about?

11. Make a list of terms from your field that you think would be useful for the general public to understand; define each one in a sentence. Pick out one or two to define more fully.

12. Write an assessment of your progess in English up to now. What can you now do quite well and easily in English? What still gives you trouble? Do you learn languages easily? Why are some people better at learning languages than others? What is it that makes language learning so difficult? What can people do to improve their ability in a second language?

13. Should people get respect even when they may not deserve it just because of the positions they hold in our society? Think of parents, teachers, politicians, etc. If so, why? If not, when should people get respect from others? Which people deserve our respect? Old people? Why? Who else? Why?

14. What did you think the U.S. would be like, and what is it in fact like? Compare the two images. Or what did you think studying at a U.S. university would be like? What is it really like?

15. Should children be exposed to as many experiences as possible to help them learn to cope as early as possible with the harsh realities of life, or should they be protected from ugliness as long as possible? How would a child who was brought up in the first way behave? And the second? What kind of adults might they become? Would you yourself rather see/know everything -- good and bad -- about life or would you rather be protected

from knowing about the bad things if they were never going to touch your life? If you had an incurable disease, would you want to know about it? If someone you love had an incurable disease, would you want them to know about it? Would you tell the person?

16. If you have siblings, where do you come in the family, oldest, youngest, somewhere in the middle? Are oldest, youngest, etc. siblings treated differently in your culture? Does the oldest, for example, have duties and/or privileges that the youngest does not have even when he/she gets to be the same age? Which position is it best to have among the children in a family? Which position would you rather have? Can you see certain personality similarities among all the oldest children you know? Youngest? Only children?

Although the students should be encouraged to try out these suggestions, even to the point of forcing themselves a little to see whether something eventually comes of their contemplation of the subject suggested, it should be made clear that the point is to write continuously for the length of time specified. If the mind wanders into unanticipated territories , so much the better perhaps. Again if the students find their minds blank, they should make an effort to describe the blankness. On the other hand, the students should be encouraged not to worry about grammar, spelling, or other kinds of mechanical errors; if they find themselves at a loss for the word which they need in English, they should not hesitate to use a native language word or even phrase. The aims of this exercise are to develop fluency rather than accuracy in English, to develop confidence in one's ability to write rather than fear of writing, and to identify possible fruitful areas for further inquiry in a more formalized writing context.

Students are asked to keep all their journal entries together in a loose-leaf notebook (loose-leaf so that they can add to it without having to haul the entire opus with them wherever they go), to date each entry, to indicate where they were when they wrote the entry, and to begin each entry on a new page. Each week they are given a list of suggestions, like the examples given above, to think about as possible subjects for entires. Of course, they may choose to write about something entirely different in their journals. However, the list of suggestions they are given is in some way linked to the current formal writing assignment. Thus, when the students are working on descriptive writing in class, the suggested topics for exploration in the journals have something to do with description. In this way, as promised in the sketchbook notion, the students have an already extant set of ideas to draw upon for their formal work in class and thereby, it is hoped, can avoid the panic of finding either nothing that seems quite suitable as a subject for their composition or little suitable to say about it. The journal becomes a resource for the students.

As a composition teacher and perhaps hypersensitive to the burden writing teachers bear of having to read, comment on, and evaluate the papers our students write, I hesitate to add to that paper burden. Part of the appeal of the form of journal writing being described here is that there is very little teacher intervention beyond verifying that the journal is being kept. Every three weeks or so a quick check on the number of entries and adequate length of the entires is

sufficient. If the journals are, however, taken up, the teacher may be in for a surprise.

If human curiosity does get the upper hand and the teacher decides to read some of the entries, it has been my experience that these journals make fascinating reading. First, the teacher may discover that the student who in writing formal compositions seems compelled to produce turgid lifeless examples of proper topic sentences followed by three proper examples and a conclusion restating the obvious (but preceded by a grand concluding statement like "In conclusion, I should like to ...") can tap the active and creative intelligence which the student has and which responds with interest and sensitivity to the world around her/him. Furthermore, although the writing is often full of errors, the errors interfere much less with comprehension than they do in the flat compositions one sometimes gets. The reasons for this seems to be that in these journals the students are trying to clearly express their thoughts to themselves so that they themselves truly understand. As a result, they may make five different attempts to state their idea; they continue to reformulate the idea until they are satisfied that they themselves have understood what they wanted to say. One often has the impression in the compositions written for a grade that the students write something down, throw their hands up in the air, and hope that the reader will "catch" their meaning through some miracle of sympathy for the writer. In the journals, however, these writers have no one to convince but themselves, and as a result the journals make fascinating and easy reading. Furthermore, because of the spontaneity of the writing that typically occurs in the journals and because of the relatively easy-to- understand conversational style of most of the journal entries, students may be asked from time to time to read an entry to the rest of the class. While actual compositions are sometimes difficult to understand when read to the class by the writer, journal entries, because of their less studied style often pose a much less significant problem.

While my students are all high intermediate to advanced, working journals can be used even at almost the most beginning levels. The literature on teaching ESL composition often registers the well-justified complaint that low-level ESL composition courses are little more than written grammar courses. Working journals, on the other hand, place emphasis on fluency and on the message rather than on the medium. Second language learners, like first language learners, rehearse the target language, however much or little they may have of it. Nothing prevents this rehearsal from being written and such written rehearsal of whatever elements of the language the student has under control or under partial control at the time is certainly more interesting and more vital to the student than changing from "Mr. Garcia is watching TX" to Mrs. Garcia . . .". Though the impact of any individual journal entry may be quite small, it is reasonable to assume that as the students at these lower levels continue to write entries into their journals, they are providing for themselves, to use Krashen's terms, a certain amount of comprehensible input.

These journal entries are not consciously organized according to consciously known principles of organization. Rather they are written in a form that encourages exploration, discovery, and learning about the English language. Further, the students are reaching one goal of a liberal education:

learning about themselves. At a time when composition as well as language specialists are talking about the importance of communication and emphasizing expression of ideas rather than correctness of form, ESL composition teachers might follow the example of native speaker writing programs and require working journals as a part of the coursework in the composition class. Although my ESL composition students occasionally complain about the amount of time it takes, nearly every student required to maintain a journal has commented on the usefulness of the journal in generating ideas to write on, thus in the long run, shortening the amount of time students had to spend on their formal compositions. Systematically done with carefully prepared topics to stimulate thinking, journal writing seems to be a way to get maximal benefit from a minimal investment of time and energy on the part of the teacher or the students.

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AN INDIRECT MEASURE OF WRITING SKILLS FOR STUDENT PLACEMENT IN FRESHMAN AND PRE-FRESHMAN ESL COURSES

Joseph O. Davidson
University of Houston
University Park

PART II

To produce the instrument reported on in PART I of this paper, it was necessary to assume, among other things, that freshman-level composition skills could be isolated and identified and that there would be an identifiable correlation between the skills being measured in the test and the skills professional readers look for in grading freshman compositions holistically.

It is generally agreed that a freshman ESL composition should be evaluated based on three kinds of features: 1) mechanical (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and handwriting), 2) grammatical (the correctness of word/idiom choice and the grammaticality of the phrase/clause/sentence construction), and 3) rhetorical (the sophistication and appropriateness of the content, the effectiveness of the organization, and the ability to distinguish fact from opinion).

Research in the last twenty-five years has repeatedly shown that it is the first and second types that have influenced many skilled readers' holistic evaluations of ESL or native English compositions (Diederich 1974; Arthur 1979; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer, 1963; Holley and King, 1974; Olsson 1977; and Markham 1976). These skilled readers have sometimes responded strongly to minor mechanical and grammatical errors which may have had little effect on whether or not the student writer communicated effectively.

During the 1970's the ESL composition evaluation "pendulum" began to swing from a greater focus on mechanics and grammar in the direction of more emphasis on the communicative effectiveness of the text (the rhetorical freatures mentioned above). One outcome of this swing was the work done at Texas A & M University by Holly Jacobs and her team of coworkers (Jacobs et al., 1981) to help skilled readers focus more clearly and consistently on a writer's communicative effectiveness. The evaluation instrument they designed (the "ESL Diagnostic Profile") gave rhetorical features equal weight with mechanical and grammatical features. It asked "readers to use effect on meaning as the chief criterion for distinguishing levels of mastery in the Vocabulary, Language Use and Mechanics components. . . ." The team concluded that "the question of whether there are few, some or many errors or certain kinds of errors is meaningful only insofar as the readers consider what difference it makes, if any, on the writer's success in communicating a message clearly and completely to the reader" (Jacobs et al., 1981: 36). Item types constructed for the placement instrument reported on in this paper are designed as indirect measures of rhetorical features (cohesion, coherence, topicalization, outlining, and topic sentences); they are another manifestation of the increased concern in our profession with communicative effectiveness.

Is there, however, an identifiable correlation between the rhetorical skills measured in the test and the skills professional readers in the 1980's look for in grading fresh-

man compositions holistically? The results are mixed.

For the spring 1982 administration at the University of Houston-University Park, the Kuder-Richardson 20 reliability correlation was .805 for the non-native speaking population (N=276) and .703 for the native speaking population (N=93). Subsequent administrations resulted in similar correlation levels: Fall 1983/Spring 1984 non-native speaking population (N=846) - .789; and Fall 1984 non-native speaking population (N=565) - .833. These quite high correlations indicate the kind of score stability necessary for a reliable test.

To investigate the relationship between the objective test scores and the scoring of written tests by trained readers, the non-native English-speaking population was required to write a twenty-minute composition on a topic designed to elicit a process paper. The compositions were then read by trained readers in a holistic rating process using stanine scores. Two readers were employed, with a third reader resolving disputes exceeding one stanine point (e.g., not between 4 and 5 but between 4 and 5+). The objective examination was machine scored, and raw scores (i.e., number right) were reported. The Pearson correlation between the objective instrument and the essay was .4749. To the extent that it was possible to sort out various native-language populations among the non-native English speaking group, correlation coefficients showed some variation: Spanish (N=20) .4437; Vietnamese (N=40) .4631; Arabic (N=23) .6068; and Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin) (N=15) .3306.

In 52 of the cases, it was possible to establish correlations between the objective examination scores and the essay scores on the one hand and officially reported TOEFL scores on the other. Those may be summarized as follows: objective test with TOEFL - .5114; essay with TOEFL - .4451. For one specific language group, the Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin) speaking population, the results were interestingly different: objective test with TOEFL - .5573; essay with TOEFL - .1304.

The mean difficulty of the items on the 1982 version of the instrument was .676 for the Houston non-native English speaking population and .792 for the Houston native-English speaking population. This suggests that the test was harder for non-native speakers than it was for native speakers, and that is as it should be; one would expect native speakers generally to do better, regardless of training, since the test supposedly taps more-or-less intuitive composing skills rather than purely learned ones.

Subsequent correlation studies between the objective examination scores and the essay scores have resulted in correlations in the .200 to .500 range. These somewhat modest correlations, though disappointing, are to be expected. The item types found in the test measure roughly half of the variables that trained readers look for in scoring written tests.

In conclusion, a forty-item machine scorable test has been developed. The Kuder-Richardson 20 reliability correlations appear sufficiently high to support a claim for reliability. The relative difficulty means for non-native English speaking versus native English speaking populations are sufficiently good to support a claim of validity.

This indirect measure of the kinds of skills fundamental to any freshman writing course isolates specific skills from

the mass of those involved in the writing process and demonstrates the possibility of writing items which seem to measure those skills. Roughly half of the variables that trained readers look for in scoring written texts are accounted for. Further research is needed to isolate the remaining skills and to write items that measure them.

I am not ready to replace written texts with an indirect test of the skills that go into composing written texts. The instrument reported on in this paper removes some of the subjectivity from the use of reader-scored written texts, but it cannot yet replace them.

The problems are many (e.g., how to assess the degree to which the appearance of a text on the page really does influence reader opinion), but the goal, a highly reliable and valid indirect measure of writing skills for placement purposes in freshman level ESL courses, is well worth the effort.

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ADVANCED WRITERS IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE by Paul Munsell and Martha Clough. MacMillan Publishing Co., 1984. 301 + xiii pages

David A. Ross
Houston Community College

Before discussing this book, let me list three basic elements which an ESL composition textbook should have to be useful in a classroom.

First, the textbook should reflect an accurate understanding of the nature of the composing process, both in general and for non-native speakers. Specifically, it should combine activities for developing the student's language skills with exercises which promote the cognitive growth of the student who may be facing composition for the first time.

Second, it should include a method of generating composition topics for the student which will be both interesting and relevant for the general purposes of the course.

Third, the format of the textbook should facilitate its use in the course.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE, in my opinion, is an outstanding success in the first category, has some minor problems in the second, and a possibly major one in the third.

Munsell and Clough demonstrate an acute awareness of the main issues, both practical and theoretical, facing the ESL composition student. At the outset, in the preface they clearly delineate their basic method: the student can best learn how to write by writing frequently and regularly. The book contains 60 units, grouped into 3 parts. Each unit is characterized by three foci: a particular form of writing (e.g. description, chronology, biography); several writing skills (e.g. editing rambling sentences, removing unnecessary details, choosing a term-paper topic); and a topic which provides some thematic unity for the exercises in the unit (e.g. "Preparing For A Trip").

While the use of any particular unit is optional for the teacher, it is obvious that the authors have developed a complete and unusually comprehensive syllabus for teaching expository writing. And each unit is admirably organized to present its main teaching points. The unit's thematic topic exemplifies the writing form. For example, "Three Main Influences in My Life" gives students an opportunity to us "classification and analysis" in a composition. The writing skills are introduced and reinforced in a series of pre-writing exercises. I found these exercises to be the most valuable part of the book, because of their careful design and because they link cognitive development with polishing of language skills.

Another salient feature of the unit structure is the editing and rewriting exercise which precedes each composition assignment. Each unit contains a sample passage which includes a number of errors frequently made by ESL writers. These passages can be corrected in class, or by students on their own, using a set of correction symbols developed by the authors. A valuable idea related to this is the "personal checklist" of errors which each student keeps, based on the teacher's corrections of his/her writing assignments. While many writing texts stress the need for the students to develop editing and rewriting capabilities, few have worked it as integrally into the basic lesson plan as this one has.

Topic selection is often the weak point in a composition textbook, largely because authors (and teachers) frequently overlook the importance of topical relevance for motivating the composition student to write. The authors of A PRACTICAL GUIDE, in particular, have their work cut out for them, because they must come up with at least 2 or 3 topics for each unit, or over 120 composition topics in all. By and large, they have done a creditable job, especially in view of the need to fashion topics which will highlight the teaching points of each unit. But I have some qualms about some of their approaches to topic selection, especially in the first part of their text. This part, which deals with the basic organizational forms of writing, proposes a number of topics drawn from the personal experiences and opinions of the students, such as "An Exciting Trip," "My Favorite Place," or "Three Major Influences on My Life." As the authors state in their introduction to this part, such experiences are "not only interesting, but also offer the writer large quantities of useful information." Furthermore, "the subject matter almost invariably allows writers to experience a warm memory that motivates rather than simply directs the writing." (Pg. 1) Nonetheless, the teacher should be aware that, for some students, public discussion of personal matters and opinions may be alien to their cultural and educational backgrounds. The result may be a hesitancy by the student to express him/herself, leading to overly general compositions, using banalities and commonplaces instead of concrete experiences and feelings.

The format of the book leaves one with the question: for whom is the book intended, for the ESL student or the composition teacher? The book is rich with ideas for teaching composition, along with a coherent, organized syllabus for presenting them in an ESL composition course. These ideas will be of enormous benefit to the teacher, who may wish to implement them in his/her own way. In this respect, A PRACTICAL GUIDE seems best suited as a teacher's guide. On the other hand, the text of the book is everywhere addressed to the students, indicating the authors' intention that the book be used as an actual course book. The format of the book expresses this ambiguity: it is a regular trade-sized, perfect-bound paperback, appropriate for a textbook which is meant to be read. Unfortunately, A PRACTICAL GUIDE is meant to be written in, so it would have been more appropriate if publishers had produced a larger, staple-bound book with perforated pages. Not only would this be more convenient for the students, but it would preserve the modular nature of the units, an integral part of the authors' original design for the book.

All in all, however, A PRACTICAL GUIDE is a valuable resource for the composition teacher, and should serve as a model for a balanced approach to teaching pre-academic expository writing.

A CALL FOR SYLLABI

I am interested in comparing and analyzing the syllabi prepared for ESL freshman composition and ESL basic writing courses, as well as the syllabi or programs for intermediate and advanced composition courses in intensive English programs. TECFORS readers who teach any of these courses are invited to send a copy of their syllabus to me, Nancy Lee, Dept. of English, University of Houston-University Park, Houston, TX, 77004. In a later issue of TECFORS I plan to share my findings.

AMONG THE EDITORS

Major changes are taking place in the lives of the editors of TECFORS. First, congratulations are due to Ann Johns, who, with John Swales of the University of Michigan, will be assuming the editorship of The ESP Journal. Because of this new responsibility, as well as numerous others, Ann has resigned her editorship of TECFORS. The other editors join me in paying tribute to her. It has been a wonderful privilege for all of us to learn to know Ann and to work with her on TECFORS. She has contributed valuable counsel, manuscripts (her own and those of others), editorial advice on articles, ideas, and enthusiasm. She has also been our public relations expert. You've been wonderful, Ann -- you leave with our appreciation, love, and best wishes.

Additional changes include a major move for Ann Daubney-Davis and her family, who will be living in Los Angeles because of Ann's husband's new job there. Ann, we are happy to report, will continue her editorial work for TECFORS there.

Kerry Segel is now putting the finishing touches on his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Texas in Austin. When this milestone is passed, TECFORS' readers will be hearing from him again.

Our last big news is that a new editor has joined our staff--Fraida Dubin, from the American Language Institute at the University of Southern California. We are delighted to have her; and to introduce her properly, we have included a special article about her in this issue.

Nancy Lee

INTRODUCING: FRAIDA DUBIN

We are superlatively delighted to welcome Fraida Dubin to our editorial staff. She will be contributing ideas, manuscripts (those of her own as well as those of other authors), editorial comments, and advice. Also, she will serve as the TECFORS resource person at many conferences.

Fraida has worked in both ESL and EFL settings as a teacher trainer, course designer, administrator, and materials writer. Currently, she is associate professor of English-as-a-second-language/Education at the Univ. of Southern California, serving as assistant director for academic affairs at the American Language Institute. She also teaches graduate courses in the School of Education and the Dept. of Linguistics.

Her interest in the teaching of reading for ESL learners began when she was involved with a project to write materials for beginning reading to Navajo children in Arizona and New Mexico. More recently, she has co-authored two reading skills textbooks (with Elite Olshtain) which are widely used in university and adult level programs: READING BY ALL MEANS (1981 Addison-Wesley) and THREE EASY PIECES (1984 Addison-Wesley). She is also co-author of FACILITATING LANGUAGE LEARNING (1977 McGraw-Hill) and IT'S TIME TO TALK (1977 Prentice-Hall).

Most recently, she has co-edited TEACHING SECOND LANGUAGE READING FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (in press, Addison-Wesley) to which she has contributed a chapter titled "Dealing with Texts." Her book on COURSE DESIGN (also co-authored with Elite Olshtain) is in press with Cambridge University. Since she spends a fair amount of time writing, she is now expanding her range of interests to include the teaching of writing in ESL/EFL.

She has been professionally active in English language teaching in the EFL world through assignments in Greece, as Fulbright grantee; Iran, as program director; Israel, as materials writer, and in Botswana and Hungary, as lecturer and teacher trainer for the U.S. Information Agency. She has also taught at the Univ. of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Her Ph.D. in linguistics (specialization in sociolinguistics) is from UCLA. She also holds a certificate in TESL from UCLA. As an undergraduate, she majored in English and anthropology at UCLA and U.C. Berkeley.

Fraida Dubin is a native of Los Angeles and still lives there.

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Editors:

Nancy V. Lee
Department of English
University of Houston
University Park
Houston, TX 77004

Ann Daubney-Davis
Humanities Division
Houston Community College
P. O. Box 7849
Houston, TX 77270

Kerry Segel
Education Building 406
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712

Fraida Dubin
American Language Institute
University of Southern CAL.
JEF 141-University Park-
MC 1294
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1294

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TECFORS

A newsletter for instructors of writing
and reading to ESL and bi-lingual (adult) students

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RENEWAL TIME IS HERE

Since TECFORS is operated by the calendar year, it is time for all but the (cherished) two-year subscribers to renew their subscriptions.

Please note your subscription status after your name on the address label. The last year of your subscription, according to our records, will be written there. (If this date is incorrect, please let us know.) All of those who see '85 as the last date are invited to rejoin the TECFORS circle.

The subscription rates continue to be the usual non-profit ones of $4.00 per year or $7.00 for two years, and $6.50 per year abroad or $12.00 for two years abroad.

Please fill out the renewal form on the last page and send it with your check to Nancy V. Lee, Department of English, University of Houston-University Park, Houston, Texas, 77004.

Our holidays will be merry indeed if all of you renew this week!

WORKPLACE SIMULATIONS: A STRATEGY FOR AUDIENCE-CENTERED WRITING

Michael Paul
Rhode Island College

Introduction

In order for adult ESL students to become part of the decision-making community of this society, they need control of English discourse; but, more importantly, they need experiences in dealing with conflict resolution. ESL students also need opportunities in sorting out their feelings about cultural differences rather than simply learning to assimilate the target language and new culture. Indeed, to limit our educa-

tion of ESL students to providing them information may perhaps create technicians rather than decision-makers and full participants in this society.

Workplace simulations encourage conflict resolution and cultural understanding in an English context, thus helping prepare immigrant students for their future lives. But especially for academic skills, conflict resolution simulations necessitate practice with abstraction skills critical to the writing of academic discourse. Teachers of college-level reading and writing often find difficulty in devising exercises that are structured on the one hand and provide free composing on the other. This article will examine one assignment that brings critical thinking skills to the theme of work through a structured series of activities for oral and written discourse.

The Theme of Work

In my composition classes at Rhode Island College, I have used the theme of work because it is one context that almost all students have experienced and have opinions about. These students, who are immigrants and refugees, are enrolled in the college's baccalaureate program; my class is the ESL section of the college's composition course, a requirement for all students. The theme of work allows for both descriptive and analytical writing, moving from personal narratives to abstract concepts; it focuses on ideas of quality of employment--what makes a good or bad job and good relations with co-workers/supervisors. Adapting core composition exercises in Ann Raimes' textbook, Focus on Composition, I make writing assignments which focus on describing what a worker does, making and supporting generalizations about the nature of work, and persuading and arguing for a certain point of view. The assignment examined in this paper is a persuasion/argumentation composition which is centered on a factory simulation (Maeroff, 1984:37). In this simulation, students collaborate on developing specifics for this mock factory by answering questions about the physical nature of work in the factory. (See Appendix 1.)

Pre-writing/Pre-reading Strategies

Before outlining a context within which work conflicts can be examined, students need to begin from a very descriptive level. In this stage, they "create" the dimensions of the factory, articulating what it looks like, how it is structured, and so on. Visualizing the factory is a necessary pre-reading/pre-writing strategy for successful language learning (Hefley and Vann, 1984:2). We discuss some of the previous assignments regarding the theme of work; students consider the subjects of their essays and the interviews of workers in Studs Terkel's Working. What problems or feelings did the workers have and why? Could they be changed for the better? Is it possible to be happy at work? These and other questions arise during the discussions. From here, the discussion moves to the mock factory. What problems or feelings do the workers have? How are the relationships between workers and management? How do the owners feel about the company? Is is profitable? How could it be more profitable? If the factory is old (students' work experience in the industrial Northeast tells them it is), then should improvements be made?

After this discussion, students break up into the following groups: owners, managers, workers and union organizers. Some students select certain positions to have a feeling of power; others like being the underdog. One Puerto Rican student who works as a low-level supervisor wanted to be a union organizer so she wouldn't have to re-experience her daily conflicts in this class. Another student from Morocco chose to be a supervisor to assist workers in their struggle for economic libera-

tion. Such an exercise helps to "de-center" students' egocentric point of view, allowing for alternative viewpoints.

By taking the time to establish clear roles and functions, a strategy for "writing for an audience" is created. Mature writers know their audience and select appropriate strategies in arguing and persuading with their addresses (Odell, 1983:112). Because students will direct their argument to one of the selected groups, this assignment gives them an opportunity with their role playing to use nuances and directness as the situation warrants. Through other activities to be discussed later, students get emotional reactions from their adversaries and cohorts: their emotional reactions account for more directed writing and more care in the writing. Lively writing, writing that emerges from students' convictions, appears because it grows out of a context that makes sense.

Students then outline specific problems and possible solutions; these conditions must be consistent with our earlier speculations. After these outlines are shared, students are posed the following questions:

> Can the non-unionized workers resolve their problems with management/owners without electing to become a union shop?
>
> Can the management make changes in employees' policy to satisfy the desires of both the workers and the owners?
>
> Can the owners make concessions that avert a potential strike and still ensure profitability?
>
> Can the union organizers convince the workers that gains can only be made through collective bargaining?

Also at this time, students are given authentic reading materials to augment their understanding of labor conflicts. The reading materials reflect opposing views on unions and job security. (See Appendix 2 for an annotated list of such materials.) Students are to use these reading materials to support arguments for their ideas. The last pre-writing exercise is a round-table dicussion using debate, questioning and reflecting to strengthen or modify ideas and support for them. The role of the instructor here is to point out how parts of the discussion can be used in their argumentative compositions.

Writing Stage

To give students a general form, students are shown office memo format and a sample of personnel policy. As representatives of the groups (management, workers), students write to another group focusing on problems that have surfaced during discussions and present solutions that take into account the needs of all groups. A good argumentative essay recognizes the viewpoints of the opposing side. Drafts of papers are exchanged, read aloud, or written on the blackboard. Errors in logic are discussed at this point. Do writers misquote or neglect evidence or ideas contrary to their own? Do writers assume the truth of a point that they should prove instead? Can the owners be called cheap or should the attack be directed on how much profit is re-invested in the company or employees? Readers often diagnose faulty logic and recommend other strategies for presenting arguments.

Final Drafts and Concluding Comments

In the final drafts, the writing has a quality of directness often found in the real world and prized in American

rhetorical style. The Moroccan student whose role was manager was chastised by the owners for having "a rather flexible attitude" in negotiations with the union. "We would like to emphasize that your position should be strictly partial to the company's interests and protective of the Board's managing policies," he was told. The employee representatives also criticized the management's notion that good communications at work prevent strikes. The employee representatives agreed that there was good communication between management and workers, but went on to say that strikes would be caused by "very hard work and very low wages." Student writers took other students to task for omissions and lack of clarity in earlier drafts. The union organizers took the owners to task for not responding to the complaints of the workers while noting that their main pre-occupation was with machinery and raw materials.

The writers of these compositions had processed much information from their previous knowledge, classroom readings, and exchanges with other students in the role play/simulation. There was a great deal of enthusiasm in the classes, which was translated in the written discourse. Because the imagery of the simulation was vivid and the sense of audience engaging, these compositions proved to be exciting reading.

Appendix 1: Pre-reading/Pre-writing Questions

How many buildings are there?
What does the factory look like?
What is the size of the parking lot?
Can it accommodate all of the employees' vehicles?
Are there special assigned parking spaces for management?
What is the layout of the factory?
Are they a service industry or a manufacturer?
What do they do or make?
What is the work schedule?
Are the bathrooms clean?
How many workers are there?

Appendix 2

The following titles are examples of the kinds of authentic reading materials that teachers can use in a theme-based approach to teaching composition.

1. "Dollars, Dignity, Security: Maintaining Non-union Status": This hospital management magazine was distributed to nursing home supervisors to, as the title suggests, maintain non-union status in their nursing facilities. The author suggests specific approaches so that "employees will not catch the disease called unionism."

2. "Why Unions?": This pamphlet takes an informal approach to explain the need "to establish industrial democracy in our private enterprise and corporate-oriented economy." This pamphlet, distributed by the AFLCIO, gives a brief history of unions and discusses strikes, which to the surprise of some students are legal in this country. This publication is available in many different languages including Spanish, Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese.

3. "Weirton in Chrysler-like Turnaround": This newspaper article discusses the success of Weirton Steel, the world's largest employee-owned company. "Behind the flowing statistics, it has been largely the commitment of the Weirton workers that has been responsible for the company's favorable performance."

4. "Framingham Auto Workers Stand Behind GM Walkout." This newspaper article reflects workers' views of an impending

strike. "If you've got to go out on strike, you go out together--not one factory here and one factory there. I don't see that you can get anything accomplished that way."

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A GUIDE TO TEACHING WRITING SKILLS TO INTERMEDIATE E.S.L. STUDENTS

Julia Williamson
Sacred Heart College
Belmont, N.C.

Writing is a skill which comes innately to no one; native English speakers and non-natives alike must be taught the fundamentals, the basics of our Greek-based rhetoric. But for the foreign student it is a quantum leap from the isolated simple sentence to free composition. The controversy concerning controlled composition versus free composition may be waged indefinitely; but for my own part, I have found that the former leads naturally into the latter in an easy, structured progression.

Our English Language Institute is divided into four ability levels. My third level writing students begin their eight-week session with exercises in sentence-completing, sentence-combining, and sentence generation and by the term's end have proceeded to the writing of quite well-organized paragraphs. By beginning their first, more complex writing attempts with controlled exercises and gradually building to the point at which they can invent their own rhetorical problems, the students tend to avoid the anxieties normally encountered in the writing class.

Having employed this step-by-step approach to the acquisition of more advanced writing skills for six sessions, I have been able to formulate week-by-week guidelines, based on a fifty-minute period each day. During the first week the students are initially given sentence-completion exercises in

order that I might establish a feel for their writing abilities. These exercises are not simple ones. In fact, they require the students to complete noun, adjective, and adverbial clauses, choose the proper gerund or infinitive to complete a phrase, and generally to be able to subordinate. Sample sentences might include:

Susan's mother persuaded her _____.
She can't go to the wedding _____.
I have never heard of politicians not _____.

To reinforce these structures the next set of exercises consists of sentence combinations using sentences taken from the first exercises. For example, Her mother persuaded her to cut her hair becomes a. Susan cut her hair. b. Her mother persuaded her. Her mother persuaded Susan _____. She can't go to the wedding because she didn't have an invitation becomes a. Why can't she go to the wedding? b. She doesn't have an invitation. She can't go to the wedding _____.

Another sentence-combining exercise is one which gradually tells a story. For instance, the plight of a little boy lost on a crowded street might be unfolded through sentence combining:

1. A boy is standing in the street.
   The boy is very young.
   The street is crowded.

2. A man starts to talk to him.
   He is kind.
   He is a policeman.

3. He asks the boy to come with him.
   The boy is afraid.
   His fear is complete.

The story would then continue for eight or ten more lines. Having completed it, the students would then rewrite the story from the point of view of either the police officer or the boy.

At the end of week one the students begin a form of generative rhetoric; that is, they are given sets of words and must form sentences from them. A set of words such as: sheep, find, several, field, might yield: They found several sheep in the farmer's field. Articles, pronouns, and sometimes verbs are deleted, thus forcing students to write intuitively and with a minimum of guidelines.

This sort of sentence generation carries over into the beginning of the second week. Next come a few days of guided writing consisting of paragraphs to be read and questions to be answered. The questions are arranged in such a way that upon their completion the students have written a brief summary of the paragraph. Such exercises are easily enough created or can be found in Comp: Exercises in Comprehension and Composition, by L.G. Alexander and E.T. Cornelius. Two days more are allotted to creating dialogs. The students are given situations which they must convert into active dialogs. A telephone conversation, for instance, might be enacted:

1. It is late Saturday night.
2. A friend calls you up.
3. You are watching a movie on T.V.
4. Your friend wants to go out to a party.
5. You don't really feel like going.
6. Your friend insists.
7. You agree to go.
8. Your friend tells you when he'll pick you up.
9. You say you'll be ready.
10. You end the conversation.

By the end of the second week, the students' recurring errors are becoming predictable, and through contrastive analysis I determine which errors seem to be localized language interference. The first two to three days of the week are given over to working on errors common to most of the students, the proper use of definite article, the importance of subject-verb agreement, and the many irregular past participles.

The final two days of the week are devoted to cloze dialogs. Finding just the right line of dialog to insert into a conversation is by far the most demanding task asked of the students to that point. The conversational dialogs I choose to create are usually one to two pages in length and have at least one-third of the passages deleted as cloze exercises.

Independent and dependent clauses are introduced and explained thoroughly at the outset of week four. Until and unless students can analyze and dissect complex sentences, the likelihood of their being able to compose them is slim. After the students are familiar with the two types of clauses, they complete worksheets in which they must identify sentences as simple, compound, or complex. The mechanics of such sentences are explained, but not heavily emphasized. Next I distribute magazines of general interest, such as Time, Vogue, or Reader's Digest, and have students find and copy several examples of simple, compound, and complex sentences. Their homework assignment is then to write original sentences exemplifying each of the three types.

This accomplished, the final two days of the fourth week are devoted to enhancing syntactic fluency through sentence combining. The emphasis here is on sentence length, complexity, and variety. The text, Building Complex English Sentences, by Eugene J. Hall, serves my purposes well. The detailed grammatical explanations which accompany the exercises I leave untouched unless clarification is imperative. Usually the students have no problem decoding the proper combining and sequencing of sentences. In fact, these exercises tend to boost the students' confidence in their writing skills.

Having worked with independent and dependent clauses, and having completed many sentence building exercises, the students are familiar with all the coordinating conjunctions and a handful of the subordinators. To encourage further and more complete written expression, a list of the transitional expressions is given the students at the beginning of week five. I use Evergreen, by Susan Fawcett and Alvin Sandberg, a writing test written primarily for native speakers. It includes a useful summary of transitions according to the relationships which they indicate: time, space, comparison, contrast, etc. I devote one class period to reviewing these transitions, clarifying the expressions such as at length, likewise, nonetheless, etc., which are unknown to the class. Later the students complete worksheets in which they must enter appropriate transitions in the spaces provided. They are also given stories devoid of any connecting words and are asked to smooth them by way of combining sentences and adding necessary transitions. It is at this point that more emphasis is placed on the punctuation of compound and complex sentences.

To put their newly acquired knowledge of transitions to use, the students practice writing business letters, some good examples of which are to be found in The Process of Paragraph Writing, by Joy M. Reid and Margaret Lindstrom. They also practice writing personal letters. I often have the class write personal letters to Dear Abby and then exchange papers and answer those letters.

By week six the students should be prepared to tackle the rudiments of the paragraph. An excellent definition of the paragraph and the steps to follow when planning one can be found in Evergreen. After explaining the paragraph to the students, I give them a topic sentence, and we brainstorm together for ideas. The ideas are listed on the blackboard and then rearranged or deleted. Together we compose, again on the board, an acceptable paragraph. Transitional expressions are a must and are heavily emphasized during the progression toward the completed paragraph. For further practice, the students are given some possible topic sentences and in a step by step fashion are to build a paragraph around their choice of one of those topic sentences.

Dissection of the paragraph is a necessity, so the next few days' work consists of completing handouts which ask students to identify topic sentences, extract irrelevant material from paragraphs, re-order the sentences of paragraphs, and find the topic sentence and the supporting ideas of given paragraphs. Such exercises are abundant in Evergreen.

Paragraph construction, coherence, and unity thus reviewed, during the seventh week, the focus is on identifying paragraph structures (such as time-ordered, space-ordered, and order of climax) and then simply on composing. To accustom the students to differentiating various paragraph structures, I prepare handouts, which we discuss, containing several examples of each type. In the next activity the students use paperback novels to find and copy examples of the paragraph structures we have studied. This exercise would be quite difficult if unguided. However, I select specific pages and also indicate the number and types of paragraphs to be identified. After more than a week's exposure to paragraph form and content, the students begin to feel more comfortable with the idea of actually composing their own paragraphs. Still, it would be folly to merely throw a topic at them and command them to write. The progression must be more gradual; therefore, for the first few attempts the students are given a topic sentence. Some of my standard ones are these: "There are several reasons why I like Friday evenings." "It's fun to take a walk in the snow." "Eating hamburgers can be fun." Although afforded the luxury of a pre-written topic sentence, the students must list for me their ideas before writing the paragraph. By the session's end they are given only a detailed scenario and must do all the groundwork themselves.

During the final week of the session the students are given handouts containing exercises on sentence consistency and sentence variety. This is done to remind them that simple sentences, redundant vocabulary, and glaring grammatical errors do not make for exciting reading. This also brings into better focus for them the fact that audience is an important consideration. Both consistency and sentence variety are treated at some length in the Evergreen text, and it is from that source that I gather and modify my exercises. These exercises, on consistency, for instance, emphasize consistency of tense, number and person, and direct and indirect discourse. The exercises on sentence variety give the students the opportunity to begin sentences with adverbs or prepositional phrases, to combine shorter sentences into longer ones or cut down on redundancy by using compound subjects and predicates.

For their final examination the students write a paragraph on any of several topics I assign. This is done only after one final review of the five steps of paragraph writing and a short diatribe on the importance of transitional expressions and the existence of a reading audience. Among the scenarios from which they may choose:

You have just visited a tropical paradise where all the inhabitants are beautiful. Describe the physical appearance of a typical male/female islander. (space-ordered)

A newspaper editor has just called you and asked that you write a humorous story for his paper describing your most embarrassing moment. (order of climax)

Thus by the end of eight weeks of guided and semi-guided composition, the students' knowledge of the fundamentals of the sentence and the paragraph has been developed, their confidence in their writing abilities has been nurtured, and they are ready for truly free composition writing.

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ESL FOR THE DEAF:
PART II: TEACHING READING THROUGH LANGUAGE-EXPERIENCE

D. Steinbach
Houston Community College

In the first part of "ESL for the Deaf" (TECFORS, March 1985) the discussion centered around a major problem faced by many deaf students enrolled in Houston Community College--the inadequacy of first language (American Sign Language) skills. These students therefore have difficulties in the acquisition of English skills, which typical ESL students do not have. Part II will focus on one of these skills, reading, and a method that has potential for teaching ESL to the deaf and others with limited literacy.

To accomodate our deaf ESL students' particular learning difficulties in 1984, we introduced a deaf-only section of a lower intermediate ESL class (English 1340--Grammar and Conversation for Foreign Speakers). It was clear from the outset that much of the existing syllabus was irrelevant for the deaf, as it focused on oral skills and pronunciation (oral skills for the deaf being the province of audiologists and other trained professionals), and that we would be focusing on grammar and written production. It was also thought important to introduce reading, although this was not a component of the regular English 1340 syllabus.

When we introduced reading, it soon became apparent that our students were not accustomed to dealing with the written

text. In one case, a high-interest, low-level article entitled "Hearing Ear Dogs Help the Deaf" was presented. As a pre-reading exercise, the students were asked through the class interpreter what they thought the article was about, based on the title. It was hoped that this question would elicit a discussion about the usefulness of dogs, personal experiences of being helped by dogs, episodes of "Lassie" and some concrete questions about how dogs were helpful to the deaf. Instead, the title elicited a recounting of a family dog which had run away, a heated discussion regarding the suitability of dogs as indoor pets, and questions such as, "Are the dogs deaf?" It was clear that to increase our students' familiarity with strategies for approaching and interpreting text would require more time than could be provided within the framework of the grammar class. It was then decided by department and division chairpersons, the deaf counselor and instructors to establish a second deaf/ESL class, English 1348--Reading and Language for the Hearing Impaired.

To understand the problems of deaf readers, certain aspects of the early language experience must be considered. First, it must be remembered that most deaf children are born to hearing parents and have no deaf siblings. The family is often unprepared to deal with this situation, and often the deaf child must conform as best he or she can to the oral mode of communication used in the household. This can cause serious first language deficits. For example, in the homes of deaf parents, or in households where sign language is used, deaf children have been observed to begin producing language at age 8 months (signing "milk," "mommy" and "daddy"). In oral-only environment, the child may not yet understand these items, let alone be able to produce them. This gap between deaf and hearing children only widens as development continues. The hearing children develop a world picture through questioning parents and caretakers (Where do Mommy and Daddy go every morning? Why do I need a measles vaccination?) When the hearing child comes to school, he or she has the language and background knowledge of the world necessary to begin the process of extracting meaning from texts: reading. Hearing children, moreover, are familiar with books through storybook reading with parents and caretakers. Deaf children who come from homes where they receive comprehensible input through signing will have the same amount of language, background information and reading experience as the hearing: however, deaf children from an oral-only environment will not.

When designing the reading course, we found that it would be necessary to help students gain the background knowledge, familiarity with the reading process, and language fundamental to text decoding. As our students all had different primary language (ASL) abilities, it was also clear that we could not expect a uniform level of reading readiness. We therefore set about to find a teaching method which would meet our students at their individual level and teach reading skills from that point. After consultation with several experts from the education and deaf communities, we adopted a modification of the Language Experience Approach.

The LEA is a method developed for use with hearing children learning to read. The child dictates a narrative, which is then presented back to the child in written form. The child can make a book, for example, by producing an illustration and then providing a narrative which the parent or teacher transcribes. Russel Stauffer (1970), a major theoretician of the LEA, estimates that the average hearing 6-year-old has a passive knowledge of about 7,500 words, and will use about 3,000 in

dictated stories. The average first grade reading text book, on the other hand, presents only about 400 words. Stauffer contends that when children use vocabulary orally in dictations, they will be able to sound out those words when presented in the written form. (While this is not the case with the deaf, an unfamiliar written word can quickly be glossed into sign.) Furthermore, when content is familiar, new vocabulary can be introduced and the reader will be able to determine its meaning through that context.

The LEA has been successfully used with the deaf before (Gromley and Geoffrion 1981). It is being adapted at HCC as follows: students are given a topic for discussion in small groups and asked to present the group decision to the class as a whole. These presentations are videotaped in ASL. The signed presentations are transcribed into English and given to the students. The class then views the videotape, discussing its content both specifically (in terms of what each group said) and generally (a renewed discussion of the topic). The same is then done with the transcriptions. After the transcriptions are read, more advanced texts, incorporating the subject matter, vocabulary, and grammar structures of the transcriptions, are presented.

This method has proven suitable to the HCC program in several ways. First, through use of the videotape, students are able to discover the English equivalents for items which exist in their sign language vocabulary. Secondly, the use of tapes has a bilingual function. As our students have varying degrees of first language ability, it is extremely valuable for the more limited students to gain new vocabulary in ASL. Perhaps most interesting of all is the inherent "formality" of videotape. As with hearing students, the deaf seem to be aware that the permanence of the recorded message demands a more formal speaking style than extemporaneous speech. The students are more careful in collecting and presenting their thoughts, and as a result the transcriptions contain many of the features of academic texts (e.g., topic sentence, point-by-point development).

The major difficulty encountered by students has centered on the subject of background knowledge, in determining what is relevant outside experience and what is not related to the texts. For example, when asked to recount a particular text, there is a tendency to bring in previously known outside information and attribute it to the text, although it has not appeared there. Another type of error is interjecting information (personal ancedotes, etc.) which do not appear to be at all relevant, thereby inferring that the student is not approaching the text in a way which would lead to a correct interpretation. These problems have been remedied to some extent by having the students outline the texts. As a result, the students focus better on the actual content of the text. Furthermore, the background experiences brought to their interpretation of the text are decidely more relevant.

The appendix includes transcriptions of two small-group class presentations by deaf students from the activity described above. The presentations were videotaped in ASL and then transcribed into English. The advanced text, prepared by the instructor for class study, follows.

Appendix

English transcripts from class presentation in American Sign Language.

Topic: Should Monster Movies Be Shown on TV?

Group 1

We think that children aged 1-3 should not be watching monster movies in the first place because they may think they are supposed to go out and kill people the same way monsters kill people. Our suggestion is that when children are aged 5 and up, they can watch monster movies because we can tell them it is not real. My suggestion is to tell them when they are 5 years old that monster movies are not real, just pretend. They are just fun to show to make people scared.

We agree with that. Movies have an influence on children when they are growing up.

Group 2

Children cannot watch monster movies. When they grow up, they are old enough to understand. Children cannot watch them because they get bad dreams. Parents don't want their children to watch TV. Children get scared when they are exposed to blood, terrible killing, etc. They see people being murdered.

Some people don't understand the word "monster." Kids must be told the meaning of the word "monster." The mother can explain it to them, but later on they start to worry, imagine bad things and want to sleep with their mothers.

Advanced Text based on vocabulary and grammar contained in videotape transcriptions

Violence on Television

Many parents and teachers are concerned about the effects of television violence on small children. Parents report that after watching shows such as Magnum P.I. or The Dukes of Hazard, children wake up at night with nightmares. Teachers complain that children who watch such shows are aggressive and poorly behaved. Psychologists fear that small children can become confused and frightened by these shows. It is also possible that after seeing violence on television (police shoot-outs, car chases, etc.), they may feel that this is the correct way to behave.

Others do not have this opinion. They say that children's stories have always contained violence (for example, Snow White was poisoned by her stepmother and Hansel and Gretel were imprisoned by the wicked witch). Teachers and parents disagree with this idea. They insist that when an adult reads a child a story, the child can always interrupt and ask questions. The adult can then explain that the witch is bad or the story is only pretend. Because the child knows and trusts the adult, he or she will not be as frightened. When a child sees violence on television, on the other hand, he or she cannot stop the action to ask for an explanation. Very often the child is alone and no adult is present. The child has no one to answer questions, and can become confused or frightened as a result.